

# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

## Monterey, California



## THESIS

### **DIMENSIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR THE MODERN UNITED STATES MILITARY**

by

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September 2002

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**DIMENSIONS OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS FOR  
THE MODERN UNITED STATES MILITARY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This thesis is a study of the literature on military professionalism and military ethics. It suggests that by developing and inculcating a recognized and well-defined Professional Military Ethic in all of the military services and at all rank levels, the modern American armed forces will gain common understandings of the nature of the Professional Military Ethic and apply it to actions in both peace and war.

The literature suggests a hierarchy of values, or, at the least, certain virtues are more often discussed than others in the field of professional military ethics. Those virtues are selfless-service, sacrifice, honor, loyalty and integrity. Leadership is also recognized by military authors as more than a practice, or talent, but as raised to the level of an ethical imperative for the officer corps. Other common virtues are duty, courage, commitment, country, honesty, and competence. This thesis provides an in-depth discussion of these values, and demonstrates how they apply to modern American armed forces.

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Without all of them, this endeavor would never have been completed.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

*“And is there anything more important than that the  
work of the soldier be well done?”*

*-Plato*

This thesis explores the ethics of the military *profession*. The morality of war involves many important questions--when to kill, whom to kill, what level of force to employ, when to protect prisoners, when to act as peacekeepers or police in the changing face of warfare, when to stop genocide or oppression. These questions are faced, and answered, by members of a professional military on a regular basis, even in so-called peacetime operations. One would hope that people who have spent years developing a sense of morality and an ability to make ethical choices only make such decisions following careful consideration. But in the military, and especially in times of war, all levels of personnel make those important decisions every day, including soldiers who have not spent years developing a sense of morality. What do they use as their guiding principles? What definitions of morality are in place within the military?

Military sociologists and other academics have studied the military under a number of different lights, attempting to define the military in terms of a legal basis for operation, political power, or as a reflection of the society it serves. All three are valid viewpoints for studying the military, but the main idea of this thesis is that the soldiers of the armed forces of the United States must have a more encompassing means of making their daily decisions, in peace and in combat. Those decisions should be based on society's recognition of the military as a professional body, and the military's own understanding and application of a Professional Military Ethic.

Why discuss the idea of ethics and morality within the military? No one would argue against the proposition that the mission of the United States military is to defend the nation and its interests and visit violence upon those who threaten its security. Most people would also agree that the military serves the people of America and is a tool to be used by the President and elected political officials. If the role of a soldier, sailor, marine

or airman (for the purposes of this thesis, hereafter referred to as “soldier”) is simple obedience, what does it matter what his or her individual value system is? The United States military was founded on the western traditions of service to the state and the noble, chivalrous ethos of the warrior. Does such an ethic still have a place in modern warfare?

## **A. PURPOSE OF THESIS**

The purpose of this thesis is to explore the content, meaning and implications of the Professional Military Ethic of today. It will concentrate on the ethic’s expression in the literature on professionalism in the military, supporting the argument that the United States military is a professional body and must think of itself as such in order to remain relevant to and trusted by modern American society. It will also analyze the content of the military ethic, what values the literature suggests are essential components of that ethos, and how the soldier addresses the ethic in today’s military.

## **B. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The modern Professional Military Ethic expresses itself in three ways: through the definition and practice of professionalism in arms, through virtues and practices recognized in military literature, and through how the individual soldier applies that ethic to himself or herself, military culture, and American society. This thesis will review key authors in the literature, asking four main questions:

- How does the concept of professionalism apply to the modern military?
- What common themes emerge from the literature regarding the content of the Professional Military Ethic?
- Where do the authors differ on the key military virtues?
- What do those opinions mean for the individual soldier?

The answers to these four questions form a foundation of a Professional Military Ethic for the military of the future. As the nature of warfare changes, so will international laws, the balance of economic and political power, and societal values and concerns. Since all of these elements will change over time, what, if anything, is unchanging, and therefore could provide a guide for the thoughts and actions of the individual soldier? Only a highly professional system of ethics within the military can provide an unchanging touchstone amidst the changing terrain.

### **C. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

No thesis on the topic of professional ethics and the military can be all encompassing. Each ethical concept is worthy of a dissertation. But so often in today's lexicon, the idea of professionalism is widely applied, and words such as honor, integrity, character and morality are used interchangeably or in concert. Such phrases are used frequently in the modern military, and to differing ends. The military must define what it means by phrases such as "be professional," or "be officers of integrity."

Though discussing the concept of military ethics, this thesis is not an analysis of Just War Theory, the Laws of Warfare, or international law. The actual act of combat, and the decisions made on the field of battle, warrant their own review and discussion. This thesis will provide a common understanding for professionalism and military ethics, and act as a starting point for applying professionalism and military ethics to the problems of war, society and the modern military.

This thesis incorporates the works of recognized experts in the fields of military sociology and the military profession. Within the theories presented, common themes in the development of the military as a professional and ethical body, i.e., the aspects of a Professional Military Ethic, and definitions for military virtues, will be found and related to the modern armed forces.

Though there are countless works on such subjects, this thesis will be limited in its scope to major theories of sociological development, primarily the works of Samuel P. Huntington, Morris Janowitz and Charles Moskos. Those theories will be compared to

written works by members of the military, chosen for their recognized contributions to the study and practice of military ethics.

There are difficulties in capturing the meaning of such abstract and subjective material as ethical behavior and professionalism. However, this thesis will be an inductive study of the written works of a number of experts, determining the nature of military professionalism, common concepts of military ethics, and the values that comprise military ethics.

#### **D. METHODOLOGY**

The topic of military ethics is a wide one, and difficult to summarize in one thesis. This thesis began as research into the teaching of ethics at the United States Naval Academy. This quickly led to the question of where and how ethical behavior is learned. Research then led to the teaching of ethics, then the psychological development of ethical thought in young adults, and then children, covering the work of Jean Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg. To return the thesis to its military application, research shifted back to the writings of military sociologists and academics such as Samuel Huntington, Morris Janowitz, and Charles Moskos.

Though the fields of military ethics and sociology are still too broad for a single thesis, the list of authors could be narrowed to those recognized as contributing to the specific fields of military sociology and professional ethics. To make it directly applicable to the military, respected senior officers, who also have contributed to the field of professional military ethics, were also chosen. To keep the topic broad enough to cover all of the services, authors who had served, or are serving in the Air Force, Army, and Navy, were chosen. To make the thesis manageable, the field of authors was narrowed and the works selected limited to mostly modern (post-WWII) works.

A list of characteristics was drawn from the literature. Most virtues were discussed by a number of different authors. A matrix was developed, showing which authors wrote or spoke about which virtues. The most commonly discussed virtues were selected as the essential, or first-tier values. The others became the second-tier of values.



It was also clear from the authors that they agree on the professional nature of the military, and its need to continually develop with changes in society and technology.

## **E. AUTHORS REVIEWED IN THIS STUDY**

The following authors were selected as major contributors to the body of knowledge of military literature. The first three are authors whose names are associated with military sociology and academic writing on the military. To help determine how these theories have affected members of the military, this thesis will compare and contrast key elements of those theories to the modern military authors and thinkers also listed below.

- Harvard professor Samuel Huntington's 1957 work, The Soldier and the State, is the first significant book about the nature of the modern military officer and his relation to society. Huntington introduces the idea that civil-military relations are based on a balance of political power, with the military clearly defined as a professional body.

- Morris Janowitz, a professor at the University of Chicago, was the first sociologist to examine the military. His 1960 book, The Professional Soldier, looks at the military's evolving demographics, stressing the changes in society and increasing technology as causes of change within the military. He agrees with Huntington's premise that the military is a profession, but does not see technological changes as lessening that professional reputation. More importantly, Janowitz correctly predicts the developing nature of warfare, coining the term "constabulary force" to describe operations other than traditional, declared war.

- Charles Moskos was a student of Janowitz and followed in his footsteps as a professor of sociology at Northwestern University. Moskos' recent book, The Military: More Than Just a Job, captures the changes that Janowitz predicted, and describes a change in values within the military from "traditional" aspects to more modern, individually based ones. Moskos describes the shift in values as the balance between institutional and occupational views of the military, and predicts a lessening of the professionalism of the military.

- Brigadier General Malham M. Wakin, USAF, Ret., helped to found the Air Force Academy's Department of Philosophy and Fine Arts, where he taught for over 20 years. General Wakin's contributions to the concepts of ethical behavior in the military are included, in part, in his Integrity First: Reflections of a Military Philosopher, published in 2000, and a collection of essays and excerpts from military experts, War, Morality, and the Military Profession, published in 1979.

- Vice Admiral James Bond Stockdale, USN, Ret., is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy and studied philosophy at Stanford University. As a Naval officer, and a prisoner of war for seven-and-a-half years in Viet Nam, Admiral Stockdale had ample opportunity for reflecting on ethical and professional behavior in a setting where his decisions had a swift and significant effect on his daily life and the lives of those around him. Following his release and awarding of the Medal of Honor, Admiral Stockdale was appointed president of the Naval War College, where he co-founded and co-taught a course called Foundations of Moral Obligation with Joseph Brennan. Stockdale's book, Thoughts of a Philosophical Fighter Pilot (1995), is a collection of speeches and essays reflecting on the values required both in combat and everyday life.

- Colonel Anthony E. Hartle, USA, served in Viet Nam and has spent much time reflecting on the nature of the military as a professional body, and the necessity of proper ethical behavior within the military. His Moral Issues in Military Decision Making, written in 1989, directly addresses the idea of a Professional Military Ethic.

- Samuel C. Sarkesian served in the U.S. Army over a twenty-year period, both as an enlisted man and officer, performing duties with Special Forces, airborne and infantry units in Germany, Korea and Viet Nam. Following his military service, Dr. Sarkesian earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University in New York and taught political science at Loyola University of Chicago. Beyond the Battlefield: The New Military Professionalism (1981), one of his many books about the military, discusses the professionalism of the modern military.

- Richard A. Gabriel is a Professor of Politics at St. Anselm's College in Manchester, New Hampshire. He served as an intelligence officer in the U.S. Army, attaining the rank of major in the Army Reserves, and has served as a Military Affairs

consultant to the staff of the House Armed Services Committee. As well as writing one of the first critiques of the military in Viet Nam, Crisis in Command, Professor Gabriel has also written a treatise on the modern military and the ethics of service, To Serve With Honor (1982).

- Though there are numerous other treatises and theses on the subject, one in particular has lent itself to historical background on the subject of military ethics. Lieutenant Richard J. Ryan's thesis from 1999, An Inductive Study of the Development, Application, and Sociological Impact of Ethics Instruction at the United States Naval Academy, has been particularly helpful as a research platform. His thesis studies the systemic aspects of ethics instruction and moral development at the Naval Academy, and includes research in theoretical, historical, comparative, quantitative and qualitative fields.

- Also from December of 1999, a monograph written by Dr. Don M. Snider, a retired army colonel, Major John A. Nagle, USA, and Major Tony Pfaff, USA, of The United States Military Academy Center for the Professional Military Ethic is of particular note for its discussion of the evolution of professionalism in today's army. Entitled "Army Professionalism, The Military Ethic, and Officership in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century," it also discusses the importance of ethics in modern warfare operations such as peacekeeping and humanitarian aid.

- A response to the above article was written in May of 2001 by Dr. Martin L. Cook, the Elihu Root Professor of Military Studies and Professor of Ethics at the U.S. Army War college. His article "Army Professionalism: Service to What Ends?" offers a more complex argument of modern professionalism and the military ethic.

## **F. ORGANIZATION OF STUDY**

This thesis is organized into seven chapters. Chapter 1 begins with a brief introduction, followed by the purpose and research questions; the scope and limitations; methodology; and finally a description of the authors and works selected for this study. Chapter II defines military professionalism and gives a brief historical overview of the development of professionalism in the military and its evolution in the modern era.

Chapter III discusses the nature of military ethics, and the historical development of the collective military virtues of discipline and obedience, initiative, and service to the state. Chapter IV examines the literature to determine which values are most commonly included in a review of the military ethic, or which values could be considered of primary importance in the development of the modern soldier. The values discussed are leadership, service, sacrifice, honor, loyalty and integrity. Chapter V examines virtues that do not appear consistently in the literature. The authors do not disagree on which virtues are essential to the military, or clearly state that these virtues are “less” important, but differ more in their usage and application of key military virtues. Chapter VI analyzes how the modern military addresses professional ethics through the individual services’ Core Value Statements. Chapter VII provides conclusions and recommendations based on an analysis of the readings, and discusses implications for the future of the military and for the future training of members of the armed forces.

## **II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONALISM IN THE UNITED STATES MILITARY**

This chapter describes the United States military as a profession using Huntington's model as a basis for a modern definition of professionalism. Besides Huntington's defining characteristics of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness, military professionalism is more than an armed force's ability to wage war, but also includes a soldier's function and ethos. Essential to a modern definition of professionalism is an ethos of service to society, as well as the uniqueness of the function that a profession provides.

This chapter also provides a brief background on the creation of a professional military, and how the United States military formed a professional fighting force over time, developing its own identity and guiding principles within the confines of American society. For a more complete review of western military tradition and the professionalization of the military, refer to Huntington's The Soldier and the State.

### **A. DEFINITIONS OF PROFESSIONALISM**

What is implied by the phrase "a professional military force?" How does one define professionalism? The term "professional," as applied to the military, is often used in the sense that the United States military is a competent and efficient force. Another sense of the word "professionalism" refers to the fact that the American armed forces are a volunteer force. Since the United States does not use conscription, those individuals who are members of the military are there by choice, and have agreed to the standards and restrictions placed upon them by military service. But neither idea is a complete definition of military professionalism.

In general, when most people think of a profession, medicine and law come to mind. They are indeed professional groups, but what traits of those occupations make them such? Are those traits applicable to the military, to make the role of the soldier a professional one?

Since 1957, most people concerned with the nature of the military have relied on Huntington's definition of a profession. He wrote the seminal work on the armed forces of the United States, clearly defining the military as a profession. "The distinguishing characteristics of a profession as a type of vocation are its expertise, responsibility and corporateness."<sup>1</sup>

Expertise, according to Huntington, is based on specialized knowledge and skill, acquired only through prolonged education and experience. Such expertise clearly defines an objective set of standards of professional competence that separates the professional from the average citizen or layman. That knowledge and skill, and those standards, are part of a broader base of knowledge in society, but can only be taught and administered by members of the profession itself.<sup>2</sup> The military is unique in its service because it is given the power, by proper civilian authority, to wage war in the national interest. No other group in America will be granted that power, or allowed to develop the expertise necessary to carry out such a function.

Because society grants legitimacy to the profession, and the profession works within and provides a service to society, the professional has a responsibility to serve that society. "The client of every profession is society, individually or collectively...the essential and general character of his service and his monopoly of his skill impose upon the professional man the responsibility to perform the service when required by society. This social responsibility distinguishes the professional man from other experts with only intellectual skills."<sup>3</sup>

For a group to be considered a profession, it must provide a valuable service to the community. Doctors provide health care to people. In short, they save lives--a very worthy occupation. Lawyers deal in justice, both in defense of citizens and in prosecution of those who are a threat to society. Most people would agree that justice, as a value to society, is indispensable. The armed forces provide America with the safety and security that fosters freedom and democracy. The concept of service to the nation is imbedded in Huntington's definition of responsibility, and, for the modern citizen-

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<sup>1</sup> Huntington, p. 8

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

soldier, has been raised to the level of a defining characteristic for military professionalism.

The modern American military is an All-Volunteer Force. When Huntington wrote of the military as a profession, with only the commissioned officer as a professional, the armed forces were still based on conscription, and operating on the WWII model of military organization. Today, every member of the United States military is a volunteer who has chosen to serve his or her country, just as every doctor chooses to serve the community, and every lawyer chooses to serve justice. For any group to be considered a profession, and especially for the military, due to its responsibility, service to society must continue to be included as a defining characteristic.

The other important aspect of responsibility in the armed forces is tied to the purpose of the military. Since the function of the military is to wage war in the national interest, its members must be prepared to do so. But this also implies that they must be prepared to accept the ultimate consequences of those actions, namely, the possibility of being killed in that service. Doctors may, under certain circumstances, risk their lives to save a patient, but it is not an accepted reality that entire hospital staffs may die in order to save patients. Similarly, lawyers are rarely, if ever, required to give their lives in the pursuit of justice. However, soldiers are expected to be willing to sacrifice their lives in defense of the nation.

This monopoly of practice extends, unlike most other professions, to the fact that members of the military profession may only practice their skills in the military. Doctors and lawyers may change hospitals and firms, or open private practices, but soldiers who leave the professional military service become mercenaries, and no longer fit the other requirements for the definition of a profession.

The last element of Huntington's definition is corporateness--the idea that members of the profession share a sense of themselves as a group apart from laymen.<sup>4</sup> This is clearly true in the military, with the wearing of uniforms, the security of military posts and stations, and, to the outside eye, the strange series of customs and traditions that

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<sup>3</sup> Huntington, p. 9

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 10

members of the profession carry out in greeting, speaking and other behavior. The sense of unity comes from the strict standards applied by members of the profession to those seeking admittance, and in the daily training and discipline necessary to maintain professional competence. This is unique in the military, as opposed to medicine or law, since the military acts collectively in its relationship with society, whereas the individual doctor or lawyer may have a single relationship with a single client for only a specified or limited amount of time. The sense of corporateness is also driven by the ethos of the profession--in the military's case, sworn to in an oath, and lived up to by the profession's members in a shared sense of history, tradition and practice.

Huntington suggests that only the officer corps contains the expertise, responsibility and corporateness necessary to be classified as a professional body.<sup>5</sup> However, in the modern armed forces, an increase in the roles for enlisted personnel, particularly the non-commissioned officers, has widened the definition.

Today, increases in military technology demand that soldiers have even greater specialized knowledge and skills. This is as true for the enlisted soldier as it is for the officer. To reach the ranks of the non-commissioned officer corps requires long years of dedicated service, written and oral examinations, and an initiation process administered by other non-commissioned officers. All of this suggests that the non-commissioned officers have an expertise and a sense of corporateness similar to those of the commissioned officer corps. Junior enlisted personnel, on the other hand, have not had the experiences necessary, or the years of specialized training to develop their expertise or corporateness, and therefore have not developed the sense of professionalism that Huntington uses to define the military as a professional body.

All members of the military, though, share the other element of Huntington's definition: responsibility. Every soldier, regardless of rank, is responsible for defending the nation, even to the point of death. However, the officer corps of the military holds a higher responsibility, not towards society, but to the profession itself. The officer corps is responsible for the training, management and leadership of the military in all aspects of its operation and daily existence. Though all members of the military volunteer to serve,

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<sup>5</sup> Huntington, p. 18



and sacrifice if necessary, there are differing levels of expertise and responsibility within the armed forces that define military professionalism.

Huntington's basic definition of a profession is an excellent starting point, but needs to be updated as the nature of the military's function and expertise evolves. While it is true that only an organization that has a unique expertise, responsibility to serve society, and sense of corporateness can truly be considered a profession, such characteristics cannot be limiting factors. As the military and society become more technologically advanced, and the society that the military serves becomes more involved in world affairs and demands a widening range of military missions, the level of responsibility rises for the military professional, demanding a change in how military professionalism is viewed.

To keep up with such changes, the definition of military professionalism must expand as well. To be flexible in the modern era, the definition of military professionalism must include the concepts of uniqueness of function and a recognized ethos, or standard of behavior.

A profession is defined by its function. The military's purpose, according to Huntington, is the "management of violence."<sup>6</sup> Many take this to mean the military's ability to wage war. Following WWII, and during the build-up of the Cold War, such a view of military function was largely appropriate. But in the modern era the uses of the military have widened to include peacekeeping, police actions, humanitarian aid, the war on drugs, the war on terrorism, and other functions known as Military Operations Other Than War, or MOOTW for short. As the missions evolve with changes in world affairs, technology, and societal aims, military professionalism must evolve as well.

Military professionalism must change because no other organization has the legitimacy to carry out such missions, just as no individual can legitimately perform surgery or decide justice on his or her own accord. No one can simply decide to become a practicing doctor, lawyer, or soldier, and become one immediately. Doctors spend eight years in undergraduate and medical schools, and serve as interns and residents in a probationary period prior to being granted the full recognition of being a doctor.

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<sup>6</sup> Huntington, p. 11

Lawyers spend three years in law school and must pass the bar prior to being a lawyer. Members of the armed forces must meet certain entrance requirements, pass the rigorous initial training, and will spend nearly half their time in the service in military schools and training, increasing their expertise and competency, and, therefore, their professionalism.

All three professions also have a code of behavior that the organization applies to those newly appointed members. For doctors, the Hippocratic Oath is central to their service; for lawyers, the Lawyer's Oath is administered upon passing the bar; for soldiers, the Oath of Office is administered upon joining the military. The professions each demand, from the beginning, that those who wish to join will live up to a certain ethos, of which service is a primary tenet.

The ideas of function and strict ethical behavior demand that only certain people be admitted into the ranks of a profession. Even once one becomes a member of a profession, the profession continues to strictly enforce the standards of behavior and performance through devices such as annual certification exams, review boards, required further education, and, especially true for the military, review for advancement from within the profession.

The modern definition of professionalism begins with Huntington's three building blocks: expertise, responsibility, and corporateness. When combined with the unique function of the military and a professional ethic, that definition can be applied to any military organization, in any country at any time. Huntington suggests that the United States military did not become a professional body until after the Civil War,<sup>7</sup> though his definition, and the modern definition, both support the argument that the military did indeed become professional. How did that evolution take place?

## **B. THE FORMATION OF A PROFESSIONAL MILITARY**

Fighting is as old as mankind. Warfare, however, as both art and science, is a relatively recent creation. When the world was mostly agrarian, people fought only for land and its associated resources; this fighting was carried out among kings, emperors

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<sup>7</sup> Huntington, p. 229

and lords. The common man, eking an existence out of the land, depended upon the strength of his or her liege, or nearest powerful lord, to protect him.

In the Western tradition, the Greeks and Romans developed the idea of the citizen-soldier, whose role in society was to defend the state and conquer enemies as necessary. But they were limited in their technology, basing warfare on formation and strength of numbers more than any other factor. Though the Greeks and Romans recognized the importance of the soldier, their armies were not concerned with establishing the military as a profession within their society, but simply considered the army a necessity for defending and expanding the empire.<sup>8</sup>

The feudal traditions of the European nations were not much more developed. The Middle Ages continued to see warfare as a means of taking lands and resources more than anything else. What did develop, however, was a middle class of warriors, the knighthood, whose members spent years in preparation for combat, and who swore their allegiances to individual lords and kings. To help control these roving bands of knights, the kings and lords of Europe developed the idea of chivalry, a behavioral code for combat, leading mankind to associate certain virtues with warfare.

But these were far from professional armies, being made up largely of adventurous, or glory-seeking young aristocrats who fought because they had sworn allegiance to an individual, or perhaps because they hoped to make a name and fortune from the spoils of war. Though most other major professions in society developed during the Middle Ages, the idea of a professional military officer is mainly a modern one.<sup>9</sup>

Two historically significant military events changed the course of European development in the profession of arms. First, the Crusades brought large numbers of people together, under arms, with a common goal--the conquering of a different people, namely the Muslims in Jerusalem. The Crusades, waged from approximately 1150 to 1300, had three distinct effects. First, they increased the number of people who had experience and training in arms. Second, they led to the development of holy orders, such as the Templars and Hospitallers, who would form the basis for military

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<sup>8</sup> Ryan, pp. 31-2

<sup>9</sup> Huntington, p. 19

professionalism later in Europe. Finally, they provided a period of relative peace in Europe, which aided in the development of cities, economies, markets and trade.<sup>10</sup>

The second major military event was the Hundred Years War, between England and France in the years 1337-1453. The relative peace and prosperous development of Europe and its mercantile class during the Crusades allowed many people to hire soldiers to fight for them as mercenaries, creating competing bodies of soldiers in urban areas. Additionally, the large numbers of people who had fought in the Crusades now needed something to occupy them, also leading to the development of mercenary armies. These armies were unprincipled in their actions, undisciplined in warfare, and wreaked such havoc during the war that the king of France called for the creation of a standing army.<sup>11</sup>

The next two hundred years saw the development of such armies in Europe, primarily in Germany, France and England. Monarchs in these nations were still trying to consolidate their power, and having a standing army was a key to success.<sup>12</sup> Most of the soldiers in these armies were common men, volunteers who had left the country life, or who had been forced into service. The officers were mostly drawn from the feudal nobility, either bribed or coerced into service by greater nobility or the monarchs themselves. The more important qualifications for most officers were availability and loyalty to a particular king or queen rather than competency on the field of battle.<sup>13</sup>

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century, increases in technology, such as gunpowder and cannons, as well as new theories of land warfare, led to the development of schools, or more precisely, military academies.<sup>14</sup> These academies were created to teach young nobles and the sons of wealthy merchants the art and science of war. Though education and training were improving, the officer corps of the armies were still made up of young aristocrats, earning their positions by birth, or the ability of their families to purchase commissions.

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<sup>10</sup> Ryan, pp. 34-35

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 36

<sup>12</sup> Huntington, p. 21

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 22

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

By the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, major military academies had been founded in France, Prussia, and England. Many people had begun to realize that war could be taught as a science, and the competence of those in positions of leadership was of greater import to the outcome of a battle than their wealth or rank. Socially, unrest in Europe over the very concepts of aristocracy, divine right and religious intolerance had raised the awareness of the common man. Enter into this picture the young republic of the United States, whose charter declared that “all men are created equal,” and whose founding fathers feared the power of a single monarch and feared the existence of a large, standing army.<sup>15</sup>

The American army was modeled after the English army in theory and hierarchy, but fought in regional, or state militias. This developed strong *esprit de corps* among the units, and placed a heavy imperative upon the officers for the safety and care of their troops. This is in contrast to the United States Navy, which still followed the English Navy’s tradition of strict discipline, using corporal and capital punishment, and the knowledge and power of the ship’s captain as final arbiter of right and wrong.

With the creation of the Military Academy at West Point in 1802 and the Naval Academy in Annapolis in 1845, the United States joined the European nations in their first steps toward a professional military. Though America was involved in numerous campaigns throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> century, including the war with the Barbary Pirates, the War of 1812, the Mexican-American War and the frontier wars with the Native Americans, it was not until after the Civil War that the professional soldier began to emerge in the United States.<sup>16</sup>

Following the Civil War America was finally and truly united in its ideals, from border to border and sea to sea. After four years of extreme brutality in war, American society turned away from most things martial. The military continued to operate, but mostly on the fringes of American society--fighting Native Americans in the unpopulated west and showing the flag overseas in Central and South America and in Asia. Most of America, on the other hand, focused inward, on rebuilding the country and its markets,

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<sup>15</sup> Huntington, pp. 143-144

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 194

and on the burgeoning Industrial Revolution. War was no longer seen as a great diversion, or something to come out and watch, like a sport, but as inglorious and evil. The military was reduced in size, budgets decreased, and many technological advances discovered during the Civil War were shelved.<sup>17</sup> Those soldiers who remained in the military became isolated from society, turning their vision inward to their own existence and to the development of military schools in engineering, artillery, naval gunfire, and many other pursuits. The United States military--following the professionalization of the Prussian army in Europe, which proved that war could be taught as a science and demonstrated the need for advanced colleges in military studies--created the Army War and Staff Colleges, and formed military societies such as the Naval Institute and the Military Service Institute.<sup>18</sup>

It was this very separation of society and military that allowed the members of the armed forces to fully develop their own institutions, establish their own requirements and curricula for the service academies, and create their own laws and systems of behavior, which Huntington refers to as the military's own character and ethic. In short, this relatively quiescent period between the Civil War and WWI allowed the military to lay the groundwork for a modern, professional force.<sup>19</sup>

The modern era further developed the professionalism of the American military, not just in winning WWII, but also in the construction of an enormous fighting force built on a core of career servicemen and thousands of volunteers. The United States military became the vehicle that propelled America into the realm of world super-powers.

Following WWII, that sense of professionalism carried the American military through the inevitable drawdown after war. Only five years later, America was embroiled in a war in Korea. The nature of warfare was changing, becoming more political and limited in its objectives. Deterrence and a constant state of alertness became central to the United States military mission, and the Cold War was born.

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<sup>17</sup> Huntington, pp. 222-227

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., pp. 229-254

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., pp. 222-229

The nature of warfare continued to change as America again found itself involved in conflict in Asia, though this time in Viet Nam. Again, politics were central to describing the mission of the military. That mission, combined with social revolution in American society, led to a general questioning of military professionalism.

After Viet Nam the military realized that its standing in society was in danger, and made drastic efforts to stabilize and improve its own view of military professionalism and society's view of the military as a whole. The build-up of forces in the 1980's and the military's involvement in skirmishes in places like Grenada, Panama and Libya, taught the armed forces the importance of being a professional fighting force. Such lessons paid off as the Cold War came to an end, and tensions flared in the Middle East.

Following operations in Kuwait and Iraq, the functions of the military continued to expand, placing increasing burdens on military professionalism. In the post-Cold War era of peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, and MOOTW, had the relationship between the function of the military and its level of professionalism changed?<sup>20</sup>

This was the question posed by Snider, Nagl and Pfaff in a paper examining the modern, professional Army. What Snider, Nagl and Pfaff feared was a decline in professionalism during the 1990's, following the fall of the Soviet Empire and the quick conclusion of Operation Desert Storm. The overwhelming victory of the American and Coalition forces in that war suggested that there was no doubt as to the expertise of the fighting forces. Though political questions as to America's responsibility for the region or purpose for fighting were raised, very few questioned the soldiers' motives for being there or their professionalism in fighting.

But the function of the military of the 1990's *was* questioned both in society and within the profession. Actions in Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia and Kosovo made soldiers question their function, and therefore their professionalism, as well as raising questions in political and social circles as to the appropriate uses of the military's expertise, i.e., the management of violence.

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<sup>20</sup> Snider et al, p. 4

### C. EVOLVING PROFESSIONALISM IN THE MODERN MILITARY

The incongruence between the military's function and its ethos led Snider, Nagl and Pfaff to study the officer corps of the Army and its current outlook on professionalism in the face of changing missions. They refer to the ideas of Sarkesian as their root model.<sup>21</sup> Sarkesian used the work of Huntington and Janowitz, among others, to define military professionalism, but applied that definition to the military on three levels: the community (society), the institution (the military), and the individual (soldier). Then, at each level of analysis, Sarkesian studied soldiers' technical abilities (expertise), attitudes and conduct toward professional ethics (attitudes towards responsibility), and the soldiers' political attitudes (how a growing sense of political power affected the military as a whole, and the soldiers' sense of corporateness).<sup>22</sup>

Military ethics will be addressed in the following chapter of this thesis, but based on the working definitions of professionalism, the function and expertise of the military are central to its existence. If the military's function is, as Huntington suggests, and the literature agrees, the "management of violence,"<sup>23</sup> and the military today is constantly involved in MOOTW, where violence may be socially, ethically and politically inappropriate, what then becomes of military professionalism? Some argue that deterrence, peacekeeping, and humanitarian aid, among other modern functions of the military, limit impending violence, and therefore *is* the management of violence, while others argue that not allowing the military to serve in its primary mission of waging war defeats the purpose of having a standing military.

The argument of those who say that military professionalism is not declining is based on the other aspects of the definition of professionalism. As the vast majority of the authors state, the military profession is granted legitimacy by society, and exists to serve society. In America, that society is governed by the people and for the people. Therefore, the military is subject to the people and the properly elected and appointed officials who represent them. If the leadership of the United States determines that

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<sup>21</sup> p. 3

<sup>22</sup> Sarkesian, pp. 6-10

<sup>23</sup> Huntington, p. 11



certain actions are necessary for the national interest, the military may be directed to carry out those actions. Throughout the 1980's and 1990's in America, such actions were deemed necessary, and, for the most part, the military functioned excellently, showing its expertise and corporateness, and living up to the responsibility entrusted to it by society.

What was, and will continue to be, required, is for the military to expand on its specific body of knowledge, and change its definition of level of responsibility to include actions under the umbrella of MOOTW. Cook suggested this in his response to Snider et al., "Army Professionalism: Service to What End?"<sup>24</sup>

There is no question that military members are obligated to follow legal orders of their superiors and to serve American society as the society's civilian leaders see fit....Unquestionably, the essence of the soldier's commitment to service entails the unlimited liability clause that he or she may be required to sacrifice life and limb in following those orders and striving to complete legally assigned missions.

In all those ways, the commitment (especially the voluntary commitment) of the soldier to selfless service of the society and dutiful obedience to Constitutionally valid authority is the root of the nobility of the profession, and the source of American society's trust in and respect for its profession of arms.<sup>25</sup>

This is not to say, however, that the military will blindly follow its civilian leaders. As Cook goes on to suggest, "Simply serving society's requests can never be an adequate definition of the obligation of any profession."<sup>26</sup> The unique knowledge possessed by members of the military places an obligation on ranking officers. Gabriel refers to that obligation as a level of responsibility.<sup>27</sup> That responsibility is to employ the military's knowledge in advising civilian leaders as to the military's capabilities, limits and effectiveness. In short, a professional soldier does not question the scope of his or her responsibility, or dedication to service, but has a responsibility to study, train, and share that expertise on how best to manage impending violence.

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<sup>24</sup> p. 5-7

<sup>25</sup> Cook, pp. 8-9

<sup>26</sup> p. 14

<sup>27</sup> Gabriel, p. 86

As the backbone for the definition of professionalism, Huntington's ideas of expertise, responsibility and corporateness fit very well into the military applications provided by Janowitz, Gabriel, Wakin, Sarkesian, Snider, Nagle, Pfaff and Cook.

#### **D. SUMMARY**

Huntington's basic definition and application of professionalism are the foundations of the military's notion of professionalism. First, a profession provides a service to society, and is therefore legitimized by society, and the professional is recognized as an expert in providing that service. Second, that service, and the professional's ability to provide it, is a unique function within society. Because of its uniqueness, the military has a vast responsibility in the application of its knowledge and its continual service to society. Third, a profession has a sense of corporateness, setting its own criteria for entrance to the profession and advancement within its ranks. It also develops its own ethos and standards of behavior that it enforces upon its own members.

But in the modern era, Huntington's definition is not complete. Not mentioned in his definition, but equally important to the survival of the profession, is its ability to develop and evolve its function, expertise, level of responsibility, and ethos to maintain the profession's value in society.

The evolution of professionalism in the military, however, is open to interpretation. The literature agrees that the military is a profession. But as the nature of warfare constantly changes, technology continues to grow, and world politics and socially acceptable behavior continually evolve, will the definitions of military professionalism still apply?

As long as the purpose of the military in American society is to defend the country and its way of life, and protect the national interest through the expert and responsible management of violence, to include deterrence and MOOTW as well as actual combat, the answer to that question is "yes." If that is the case, Janowitz raises the next most important question: "'Professionalization' is a concept which implies an element of desirable behavior. As it applies to the military, it presents an ambiguous

topic, for what is the import of ethics and responsibility for the professional combatant?"<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Janowitz, p. 6

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### **III. THE PROFESSIONAL MILITARY ETHIC AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLECTIVE MILITARY VIRTUES**

The literature agrees that the military is a profession, and that a sense of professionalism is required to develop an organization's ethos. It also suggests that for a profession to survive, it must continually support and evolve its ethical standards. As the military function changes and responsibility expands, recognizing and employing a Professional Military Ethic will help the military maintain its status as a profession and its value to society.

This chapter will explore common understandings of military ethics and the historical development of key military virtues--discipline, obedience, initiative and service to the state. These key characteristics and values are evident in the vast majority of the literature on the military profession and its development. Many of the authors studied for this thesis commented on the role of these virtues in developing the Professional Military Ethic of today.

#### **A. THE NATURE OF MILITARY ETHICS**

Before answering the question posed by Janowitz at the end of Chapter II of this thesis, namely, "what is the importance of ethics to the soldier," one must first define what aspects of ethics are important for the military. Gabriel states that military ethics "can be defined as the art of observing those moral obligations and precepts that are appropriate to a person's role within the military profession."<sup>29</sup> What does Gabriel mean by appropriate moral obligations and precepts?

Professions are creations of mankind to serve society. The military is a profession. Its professional purpose and function demand certain behaviors. Behaving in certain ways shows what kind of person one is, or one's character. Human society expects certain behaviors to occur; those expected behaviors are moral obligations and precepts.

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<sup>29</sup> p. 29

Ethics, then, is the way man ought to act. Military ethics is how a soldier ought to act, agreed upon by the profession of arms, i.e., those actions which are appropriate. But an ethic is more than just actions; it is also one's character, the virtues that one lives up to and the traits one possesses. Someone of good character has a predisposition to act as a good human being. An officer of good character, serving in the military, has a predisposition to act in a manner appropriate to his or her profession, carrying out those moral obligations expected by society and the profession. In contrast, an officer of bad character, predisposed to act in an inappropriate manner, would carry out those actions that would benefit only him or her. Therefore, to be a good soldier, and especially an officer of good character, one must first be a good human being. Simply following the rules of society, or the rules of one's profession, does not qualify one as ethical. Morality is a personal choice applied to actions and events in everyday life, as well as in moments of challenge.

Virtues are *ways of being* rather than *ways of doing*, although they are inevitably connected when ethical action must be undertaken or ethical choices made....Without some virtue ethical action is impossible, but it must still be recognized that the inculcation of character traits in and of itself will not produce ethical soldiers. The paradox is that men of great character are quite capable of committing grievously immoral acts.<sup>30</sup>

How, then, to keep soldiers of good character from committing immoral acts? The answer is through the military's sense of professionalism and the inculcation of a military ethic. Together, society and the military determine which values are included in that ethic.

## **B. THE HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY VIRTUES**

Heroism, valor, gentlemanly conduct, honor, integrity, the martial spirit--these are all virtues that would probably appear on anyone's list of the characteristics of the ideal military officer. From where do such virtues, and their association with the military, come?

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<sup>30</sup> Gabriel, p. 151

Huntington suggests there are three ways to look at the “military mind:” (1) its ability or quality; (2) its attributes or characteristics; and (3) its attitudes or substance.<sup>31</sup> The first approach is limited in its scale, as well as being subjective. There is no comprehensive way to compare the quality of a soldier’s mind to that of any other person. Simple intelligence quotient comparisons don’t take into account the role of the soldier as a professional, which is completely different from the role of a doctor or lawyer, or any other occupation for that matter. Basing a comparison on who is smarter does not take into account the characteristics of the type of person who becomes a soldier.

The second way of looking at the military mind that Huntington examines “holds that the uniqueness of the military mind lies in certain mental attributes or qualities which constitute a military personality.”<sup>32</sup> Most people hold the image of the soldier as “disciplined, rigid, logical, scientific; [he] is not flexible, tolerant, intuitive, emotional.”<sup>33</sup> But again, such sweeping generalizations are not useful. As the military has modernized, and society has become more connected and technologically advanced, the characteristics of the military professional have also changed, proving that labeling someone as simply “military-minded” is no longer enough.

The third approach Huntington uses examines military values. This approach is not only more appropriate for defining the military mind; it is also timeless in its ability to evaluate the military profession.

The military mind, in this sense, consists of the values, attitudes, and perspectives which inhere in the performance of the professional military function and which are deducible from the nature of that function....A value or attitude is part of the professional military ethic if it is implied by or derived from the peculiar expertise, responsibility, and organization of the military profession.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, individuals may come from all walks of life, but once they become soldiers, they must accept a sense of professionalism that places certain values and ideals above others.

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<sup>31</sup> p. 59

<sup>32</sup> Huntington, p. 59

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., p. 60

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p. 61

First and foremost, a soldier must be a good human being. That requirement, by the standards of the military profession, is balanced by the function the military serves. The ability to manage violence is not required to be a good human, but it is required to be a good soldier. As long as the function is clearly defined, the values associated with the profession must be clearly defined. As the function adapts, so will the values. The Professional Military Ethic, then, is, as mentioned above, timeless, and applicable no matter where in the world the soldier serves, as long as there is appropriate adaptation.

So long as there is no basic alteration in the nature of the military function there will be no change in the content of the professional ethic. Simple changes in military technique, such as developments in weapons technology or the increased importance of economics in military affairs, do not alter the character of the military ethic any more than the discovery of penicillin altered medical ethics. The military ethic consequently is a constant standard by which it is possible to judge the professionalism of any officer corps anywhere anytime.<sup>35</sup>

The days of the unquestioning military man are over. There have been dynamic changes in society, technology and world politics in the last half-century. The view of the military mind as inflexible and inadequate has changed. But the purpose of the military has not greatly changed. Can society and the military profession modernize their views of the military and still manage to function? As Huntington suggests, if society and the armed forces view the military through the lens of professional ethics, the answer is “absolutely.” Janowitz states that,

...since the perspectives of men are fashioned by their daily tasks, the life of the military professional produces a pattern of mental traits which are blunt, direct, and uncompromising. The military establishment is seen as an institution in which ‘debate is no more at a premium than persuasion: one obeys and one commands.’ This may have been the environment of the military establishment of the past, but it hardly describes contemporary military organization, where sheer size and technical complexity require elaborate procedures to insure coordination.<sup>36</sup>

If that is true, how did it come to pass? What were the military values, and how have they changed?

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<sup>35</sup> Huntington, p. 62

<sup>36</sup> Janowitz, p. 4



## 1. Discipline and Obedience

Throughout much of history, warfare, and therefore soldiering, was considered to be simply an act of discipline. Battles were fought and won on the basis of which side could use their spears and shields, lances, guns, or ships of the line in the most direct and efficient manner. Warriors, knights, mercenaries, soldiers, peasants, and commoners alike swore their allegiances to more powerful monarchs, and did what they were told upon pain of punishment or death. Lashings, impressments, flogging and even capital punishment were commonplace for the everyday soldier. As a concept of leadership, it fit with the idea that officers, all commissioned from the nobility, were somehow better than their soldiers by right of birth or wealth.

The professionalization of the European armies, and the creation of the United States, where people declared that “all men are created equal,” led to a different view in the treatment of the common soldier, and the qualifications for commission as an officer. However, the American military was still modeled after the British Army and Navy, and, as Huntington points out, prior to the Civil War,

Military writers of both services were vehement in their attacks on individualism, and went to extremes in their glorification of the military values: subordination, loyalty, duty, hierarchy, discipline, obedience. The group was supreme over the individual. The highest glory of the soldier was ‘obedience, unthinking, instinctive, prompt and cheerful obedience.’<sup>37</sup>

Technology, however, had an effect on the nature of discipline and the quality of officers in the services. As the nature of warfare changed, and guns increased in range, rate of fire, and accuracy, the discipline of “holding the line” became less important, and officers had to routinely prove their competency in the science of war, and not demand obedience simply due to their station in life.

Not to say that discipline and obedience were not required for military service, but the nature of discipline had changed in society, as well as in the military. Janowitz cites a 1905 Journal of Military Service Institution, “Succinctly, the atmosphere of the army today is one of clean lives, honorable dealing, an enthusiastic devotion to country, an

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<sup>37</sup> Huntington, p. 258

atmosphere enforced by a system of rigid discipline whose object is the correction and encouragement, rather than the punishment, of the individual.”<sup>38</sup>

As Janowitz states,

When military discipline was based on domination, officers had to demonstrate that they were different from the men they commanded. Today, leaders must continuously demonstrate their competence and technical ability, in order that they may command without resort to arbitrary and ultimate sanctions...contemporary roles depend on the quality of the men who occupy professional positions.<sup>39</sup>

If discipline and obedience were evolving into something other than the highest of military values, what were they becoming, and what was replacing them?

## **2. Initiative**

The technological and social advances of the Industrial Revolution led to changes in how society viewed war. Increasing automation and mass production were technological breakthroughs. As cities grew in grandeur and importance, and people in America became more affluent, the focus shifted from the rural community to the urban individual. At the same time, the invention of electricity, steam ships, machine guns, photography, improved communications, airplanes, submarines and tanks would lead to rapid changes in warfare tactics and capabilities in the First and Second World Wars. As S.L.A. Marshall wrote, following the Second World War:

The philosophy of discipline has adjusted to changing conditions. As more and more impact has gone into the hitting power of weapons, necessitating ever widening deployments in the forces of battle, the quality of the initiative in the individual has become the most praised of the military virtues.<sup>40</sup>

The shift in military virtues proceeded from discipline and obedience, to initiative, and continued throughout the Viet Nam conflict. American society also continued to evolve, embracing individuality and freedom as the supreme American values. From the turn-of-the-century on, social consciousness rose, unions formed and

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<sup>38</sup> Janowitz, p. 39

<sup>39</sup> p. 44

<sup>40</sup> Janowitz, p. 40

organized, and workers', minorities' and women's rights movements began in earnest. From WWII into the 1970's, the Civil Rights movement became a major concern of American society. The rights of the individual and the distrust of corporations and government became important issues to the American public.

The military reached a low point in its standing and trust with society in the 1970's. In large part, this was due to the American public's dissatisfaction with Viet Nam conflict. At the same time, the military and American society de-emphasized the importance of professional ethics. The business model of military efficiency introduced the era of zero-defect military behavior. As the military sought to reduce its size and costs, military commanders were tempted to be creative in how they reported troop strengths and readiness, for anything less than the expected standard would be too costly to their careers. Moskos developed his occupational model of military service to describe the shift from traditional military virtues of discipline, obedience and military honor to a perversion of the virtue of initiative--namely, careerism.<sup>41</sup>

The 1980's saw resurgence in the strength of the military and a shift in American society's values from individuality and personal freedom to personal and national success. As the size of the military, and its budget, began to rise again, the military profession regained some of its prestige. But careerism continued as well, as many members of the military looked to get ahead in a boom economy, with little regard for their professional ethic.

### **3. Service**

This era in military history culminated in the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the collapse of the Soviet Union, allowing America to declare an end to the decades-old Cold War, justifying the large expense of tax dollars in the 1980s. The American public's trust and faith in the military were largely restored, setting the framework for the American military's next major challenge: defeating Iraq during Operation Desert Storm. Without delving into the politics or economics of the decision, the operation was about defending a smaller nation from aggression, a mission that, combined with the rise of those leaders

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<sup>41</sup> p. 3

who had served as small-unit commanders in Viet Nam, returned the American military to its moral roots.

American society also saw a return to a more service-oriented focus. Across America universities re-introduced courses in ethics, businesses introduced ethics positions on their company boards and staffs, and the American public began challenging police forces, medical associations, even charities and non-profit groups to improve their standards of ethics. Wakin writes

Courage, selflessness, loyalty--these are the qualities we seek in our military professionals, but knowing about them does not produce them in a crisis. It is moral character we seek, must have, at every level of military leadership. In this regard, the recent resurgence of virtue ethics in philosophy classrooms around the country has special significance for the military profession. Moral education is important, indeed crucial, but it must include an understanding of the need for developing the moral virtues in those who lead our professions. Only persons of habitual integrity and moral sensitivity can be trusted to take into account the rights of noncombatants, to perceive when orders are unlawful or immoral, to separate concern for image from concern for mission, to report honestly, to perceive when institutional policies unnecessarily strain the moral fiber of subordinates, and to serve society before self.<sup>42</sup>

One could create a long list of virtues to describe a good person. An individual could have any number of these qualities, but still be a poor member of society, or a poor professional. The reverse logic also applies--that there are a number of virtues that describe a good soldier that need not apply to the average American citizen.

It is undoubtedly true that without those distinctly military virtues, i.e., discipline, obedience, and initiative, a person could never be a good soldier. A soldier must have the discipline to be obedient to his or her principles, and not simply to arbitrary rules or to any one individual. But that soldier must also be willing and obedient in following orders that may cause grave harm, or contain great personal risk. A soldier must have the initiative to act, to lead and be decisive, for lives may depend on it. But first and foremost in the modern American armed services, a person must volunteer, "to serve society before self." To be a good soldier--to be a professional soldier--requires the

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<sup>42</sup> Integrity First, p. 112

citizen to answer the call to serve. In becoming a soldier, one becomes greater than one's self, willing to sacrifice for the defense of the nation.

### **C. SUMMARY**

In the last 100 years the American military has experienced an upheaval in attitude, demographics, technology, and, to some degree, organization. What has not changed is the military's purpose, or its uniqueness as a profession in the service of society. Though individual military values have evolved with changes in society, technology, and military leadership, the unchanging basic function of the armed forces allows it to maintain elements of each of the traditional virtues.

The military, collectively, has evolved from a foundation of discipline and obedience to a service-oriented force. The soldier of today is a volunteer, contributing to the profession and its role in American society. To successfully maintain that position in society requires the inculcation of personal and professional virtues, both collectively as a single military, and individually as unique soldiers in the service of their country.

If that is true, which values are most important to the modern American soldier?

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## **IV. THE CENTRAL VIRTUES OF THE SOLDIER**

Discipline and obedience, initiative, and service could also quite easily be counted as virtues required for the individual soldier. And, of course, they are essential to the success of today's warrior. However, the literature suggests that there is a more complete list of values that are considered essential to the core of the Professional Military Ethic. Those values are leadership, selfless service and sacrifice, honor, loyalty and integrity.

### **A. MILITARY LEADERSHIP AS AN ETHICAL VIRTUE**

The United States military looks to its officer corps to set the professional standards in military knowledge, competency, uniformity, behavior, and all aspects of military life. Each officer is commissioned as "an officer and a gentleman," not in the modern sense of being a polite man, but in the entire package of social and professional graces. This harkens back to the medieval chivalric traditions of being technically competent in the arts of war, but also gentling one's condition when not on the field of battle. This mantle of responsibility is placed upon the officer corps because the officer corps carries the moral obligation, inherent in the profession and expected by society, to lead the men and women of the armed forces into combat to kill and be killed. The ethical responsibility to defend American society rests directly on the shoulders of the officers of the United States military, an obligation for which the modern officer corps volunteers.

Most people think of leadership as a talent, or a practice. But for the military, leadership's importance to the success of a mission and the lives of the soldiers engaged in that mission raises leadership to an ethical imperative. Sarkesian refers to the choice to be a leader of soldiers as "officership." He believes it is important because it distinguishes officers from other ranks, based on the idea of "special trust and confidence," in the words of an officer's commission, and sworn to in the Oath of Office.<sup>43</sup> That "special trust and confidence" is bestowed upon an officer from the President of the United States, showing faith in the officer's "patriotism, valor, fidelity,

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<sup>43</sup> Sarkesian, p. 204

and abilities.”<sup>44</sup> Though not spelled out in any further detail, the responsibility of leadership that rests in the military officer has developed through history, tradition and in the literature of military professionals. It is based on the ethical responsibility of the officer for the lives and actions of the men and women under the officer’s command.

Besides their physical well-being, Wakin also includes the values of the soldiers under an officer’s command in the purview of the military leader.

The authority of military superiors over their subordinates is stronger and more complete than that of almost any other human relationship in our societal structure. With that authority goes the frightening responsibility to respect the dignity of individual subordinates at the same time that military order and discipline are preserved. It is precisely in the person of the military leader that the liberal and the conservative values must be brought together in a daily attempt at fragile balance.<sup>45</sup>

Another military leader equally convinced of the necessity of a commander’s concern for values in the armed forces is Vice Admiral James Stockdale. Stockdale spent nearly eight years as a prisoner of war in Viet Nam. He was faced daily with the threat of torture or death, but was still responsible, as the senior officer present, for maintaining a position of leadership among his fellow prisoners. It was his moral obligation as an officer, and as a human being, to attempt to ensure that his fellow prisoners met their own obligations, their Oaths of Office, and the Code of Conduct for prisoners of war, and still be mentally prepared to return to American society following captivity and torture. His experience proved that soldiers could be forced to betray their countries through extreme torture and deprivation, but not lose their morals. As discussed in Gabriel’s model of military ethics, such coercion would literally make one unable to choose any other alternative but to “break,” and since there is no alternative, no ethical choice may be made, and there is no breach of ethics. Stockdale believed that the struggle in captivity was not primarily a matter of life or death, or of affecting the outcome of the war, but a matter of maintaining their honor and morality.

Stockdale also believed, as did the ancient Greeks he studied, that the question of man’s moral development was central to man’s existence, and to truly be a good person,

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<sup>44</sup> Commission of an Officer

<sup>45</sup> Integrity First, pp. 82-3



one had to be challenged ethically. Stockdale likens this idea to the Greek alchemists' concept of the hermetic--that by putting material under extreme pressure, one could change its physical characteristics. In Stockdale's prison experience, the material under pressure was man's ethics. "The higher alchemy aimed not at mere physical change but at moral and spiritual transformation."<sup>46</sup> In order to achieve their goal of returning with honor from prison, all of the prisoners had to make the change from simply doing their jobs, to personally choosing to risk life and limb for their values, and to accept that their honor and morality were values above all others.

Training a soldier to accept the Professional Military Ethic is also the responsibility of the military officer. Even in times of peace, a leader must train his or her troops to prepare for the moment of greatest ethical challenge. Such training is accomplished through example, reading, discussion, and in the practice of everyday military reporting and living. A Professional Military Ethic that is recognized by the armed forces, inculcated in the newest of recruits, and trained to constantly, prepares soldiers for that moment.

Janowitz argued for such an ethic even prior to the Viet Nam conflict, in his The Professional Soldier, discussing the difference between those members of the military who look upon war and the military profession as simply a business proposition, and those who embody the historical values associated with service.

Certainly, traditional loyalties are essential for all organizations, but in the military establishment they are peculiarly powerful. The development of a rational approach to innovation cannot supplant an uncritical willingness to face danger--the essence of the martial spirit. In a sense, the distinction between the military manager and the heroic leader can easily be misunderstood. Military managers--in the ground, air, and naval forces, are aware that they direct combat organizations. They consider themselves to be brave men, prepared to face danger. But they are mainly concerned with the most rational and economic ways of winning wars or avoiding them. They are less concerned with war as a way of life. Heroic leaders, in turn, claim that they have the proper formula for the conduct of war. They would deny that they are anti-technological. But for them, the

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<sup>46</sup> p. 4

heroic traditions of fighting men, which can only be preserved by military honor, military tradition, and the military way of life, are crucial.<sup>47</sup>

What Janowitz presents here is similar to what Stockdale said about his experience. To survive in combat, indeed to excel, as the military profession has an obligation to, requires cultivating the traditional martial spirit--a willingness to face danger and risk everything in personal liability. Those who have such values Janowitz calls the heroic leaders. Janowitz refers to those who look at warfare as a modern economics puzzle, simply a matter of resources and opportunity costs, as “military managers.”<sup>48</sup> Certainly, a good leader must manage the resources available to him or her, both in soldiers and in materiel, but if warfare becomes simply a matter of bottom-line numbers, the moral aspect will be lost, and so will society’s trust in the military profession.

In fact, Stockdale insists that a military leader must be a moralist,

First, in order to lead under duress, one must be a moralist. By that, I don’t mean being a poseur, one who sententiously exhorts his comrades to be good. I mean he must be a thinker. He must have the wisdom, the courage, indeed the audacity to make clear just what, under the circumstances, the good *is*. This requires a clear perception of right and wrong and the integrity to stand behind one’s assessment. The surest way for a leader to wind up in the ash can of history is to have a reputation for indirectness or deceit. A disciplined life will encourage commitment to a personal code of conduct.<sup>49</sup>

Stockdale, though, does not endorse the idea that anyone should unilaterally decide what is right or wrong and act on it. “But I’m not here to sell the idea of ‘letting it all hang out.’ On the contrary, we as warriors must keep foremost in our minds that there *are* boundaries to the prerogatives of leadership: *Moral* boundaries.”<sup>50</sup>

This is the new tradition for the modern military. The officer becomes a leader not by right of birth or wealth, but by right of ethical action. A military professional, and most importantly, an officer, must be an officer of character.

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<sup>47</sup> p. 35

<sup>48</sup> Janowitz, p. 21

<sup>49</sup> p. 45

<sup>50</sup> p. 152

Janowitz suggests that,

The history of the modern military establishment can be described as a struggle between heroic leaders, who embody traditionalism and glory, and military ‘managers,’ who are concerned with the scientific and rational conduct of war. This distinction is fundamental. The military manager reflects the scientific and pragmatic dimensions of war-making; he is the professional with effective links to civilian society. The heroic leader is a perpetuation of the warrior type, the mounted officer who embodies the martial spirit and the theme of personal valor.<sup>51</sup>

Leadership is but one of the virtues that Wakin, Janowitz, and Stockdale argue are central to the American military ethic. As values change, and society, technology, and the military function change, the ethics of the military must adapt as well. If those values do not evolve, the military will lose its professionalism, and truly become nothing more than a modern corporation or bureaucratic body. What Janowitz feared in 1960, and Stockdale saw in Viet Nam, first as a jet pilot, then on the ground without the benefit of modern technology, is that, increasingly, a reliance on technology, or the push-button mentality, leads to a greater moral relativism in warfare. The business model of military bureaucracy is a dangerous concept when it comes to the moral choice to wage war. Janowitz does not discount the military manager or the military technologist, but fears the loss of the humanism in warfare that the heroic leaders of traditional martial spirit and values provide. Only through exhorting the military virtues will America maintain the professionalism and legitimacy of its armed forces.

## **B. THE ESSENTIAL MODERN MILITARY VIRTUES**

### **1. Selfless Service and Sacrifice**

There is very little distinction between the concepts of selfless service and sacrifice in the military profession. As Stockdale writes, “Probably no character trait was so universally identified by our Founding Fathers as essential to the long-run success of the American experiment as selfless public virtue.”<sup>52</sup> Though the Founding Fathers believed that holding public office and contributing to the young republic of America

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<sup>51</sup> p. 21

<sup>52</sup> p. 74

were inherent in one's life as a citizen, they also expected that public virtue to be displayed in a willingness to offer one's effort, time, and even life, in service to one's country as a citizen-soldier.

As quoted earlier from Wakin, the concept of service is what drives the modern military. Since the elimination of the draft, and the creation of the All-Volunteer-Force, the military has been comprised of only those who choose to serve. Those that make that choice have also chosen to willingly fight and die for their country. As Gabriel states, "For members of the military, the requirement of service is total."<sup>53</sup>

The military virtue of sacrifice is rooted in the act of giving one's life for one's fellow soldier and country. According to Gabriel, sacrifice "is the very basis of professionalism. The military is sworn to serve the state and the society."<sup>54</sup> Gabriel goes on to compare the military to all other professions in this regard: "No civilian profession requires the sacrifice of one's life in its service, whereas the military regularly requires it. The clause of unlimited liability separates members of the profession of arms from *all* other professions in civilian life."<sup>55</sup>

The service provided by members of the military is the defense of the nation and its interests, even to the point of making the ultimate sacrifice. Modern military honor rests on this point.

## **2. Honor**

The literature suggests that honor is one of the most important virtues for the modern military, making it distinct from all other professions. In fact, Janowitz suggests that "the style of life of the military community and a sense of military honor serve to perpetuate professional distinctiveness."<sup>56</sup> But what are the elements of military honor that make it so?

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<sup>53</sup> Gabriel, p. 87

<sup>54</sup> p. 159

<sup>55</sup> p. 87

<sup>56</sup> Janowitz, p. 15

The key to Janowitz's definition of military honor is the over-riding principle that, "The professional soldier always fights."<sup>57</sup> In contemporary times such a statement may seem out of place, but it has been proven time and again, that when threatened, there are those in America who will rise to the challenge and defend the nation and its interests. This is the foundation of military honor.

Janowitz suggests there are four parts to military honor, carried over from the British model when the United States first created a military. "Military honor meant, first, officers were gentlemen; second, fealty to the military commander was personal; third, officers were members of a cohesive brotherhood which claimed the right to extensive self-regulation; and fourth, officers fought for the preservation and enhancement of traditional glory."<sup>58</sup>

The concept of gentlemanly conduct prevails even today. As mentioned earlier, the commission of an officer still includes the phrase "officer and a gentleman." This is a unique balancing act in the American military, because the United States was founded not on the principles of aristocracy, but equality. What the American ethos accepted, however, were the concepts of chivalrous behavior in warfare, integrity in the officer corps, and the belief that only a gentleman could carry such military responsibilities as the direction of combat, and the determination of life and death.

In the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the technology of warfare increased in its destructive power, culminating in the construction of the atomic bomb, which challenges the very notion of chivalry in battle. Today, the threat of total war, weapons of mass destruction, and acts of terrorism have increased the risks to society as much as the risks to the military.<sup>59</sup> The destructive power of many modern weapons has changed the nature of chivalry in battle, becoming based more on legality. But the nature of chivalry in the Professional Military Ethic, as it relates to the gentlemanly conduct of the individual soldier, still remains.

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<sup>57</sup> Janowitz, p. 215

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., p. 217

<sup>59</sup> Ibid., p. 219

### 3. Loyalty

Since Janowitz includes loyalty as a component of honor, it will be addressed here, first as the idea of personal fealty, but expanded on to include modern definitions. Though the British model of military organization gave loyalty to the person of the king, the American military, from the beginning, has sworn to “support and defend the Constitution of the United States.”<sup>60</sup> The Constitution, a document by the people and for the people, gives American society legitimate control over its military. The individual soldier’s loyalty is to the Constitution, and not to an individual.

Loyalty to an individual is not an act of fealty, but is felt within a military unit towards the other soldiers in that unit. Most people, though, especially those not in the military, think of loyalty as something given to a superior. Being obedient to a superior’s orders, and trusting and supporting the leadership of one’s superior is a form of loyalty. The virtue, though, is not in the relationship between individuals, but in the practice of mutual adherence to a professional ethic among soldiers. “In the context of military ethics...loyalty is extended to faithfully and ethically carry [sic] out those obligations that one has sworn to uphold as a member of the profession of arms.”<sup>61</sup>

The concept of loyalty derives from the medieval practice of swearing fealty to a lord, freely obligating oneself to the aims and intentions of that ruler.<sup>62</sup> In turn, the lord had certain responsibilities to his or her vassals, once they had sworn fealty. Today, historians might argue about how well that relationship worked, but the idea of loyalty as an oath and obligation continues to exist for the modern soldier. “The soldier’s loyalty is extracted essentially from the oath he takes upon entering the profession to preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution...loyalty to superiors ought never to be so interpreted that it interferes with the larger legitimate loyalty to the Constitution, the civil order, and the profession itself.”<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Oath of Office

<sup>61</sup> Gabriel, p. 158

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 158

In the hierarchy of required values for a good soldier, loyalty to the ideals of the nation and the profession comes before loyalty to a single individual. But, as suggested before, on the field of battle, loyalty to one's fellow soldiers is perhaps the single greatest motivator of combat troops. Stockdale quotes J. Glenn Gray, a professor of psychology at Colorado College until his death in 1977, and a soldier on the battlefields of Europe in WWII:

Numberless soldiers have died, more or less willingly, not for country or honor or religious faith or for any other abstract good, but because they realized that by fleeing their posts and rescuing themselves, they would expose their companions to greater danger. Such loyalty to the group is the essence of fighting morale. The commander who can preserve and strengthen it knows that all other physical and psychological factors are little in comparison.<sup>64</sup>

Stockdale himself places great stock in the power of loyalty to his fellow soldier. In his case, as a prisoner of war in Hanoi, he was removed from actively pursuing the goals of the war, and unable to communicate with his own superiors. Finding himself the senior ranking officer in a seemingly untenable position, Stockdale's response as a professional soldier was to organize his fellow POWs, issue orders to be followed even unto death, and do everything within his power to protect his new troops and their honor. As Stockdale states, "The question is sometimes asked of those who have been in high-stress situations for long periods, 'What kept you going?' 'What was your highest value?' My answer is 'the man next door.'"<sup>65</sup>

Are there two forms of loyalty--one to a concept, such as the nation, and one to an individual or individuals? A professional soldier who lives up to the ethos of the military realizes that he or she can be loyal to the Constitution and to his or her fellow soldiers. It is when these two loyalties are in opposition that the soldier must rely on his or her knowledge of ethical behavior to determine which loyalty is the right one.

Just as a soldier has a duty to obey a superior officer, to show loyalty, that superior officer has 1) an obligation to be loyal to the Constitution, and only give legal orders; and 2) an obligation to be loyal to his or her troops, by caring for their needs,

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<sup>64</sup> Stockdale, p. 8, from J. Glenn Gray, The Warriors, Reflections on Men in Battle

<sup>65</sup> p. 8

ensuring they are trained in their mission, and in not spending their lives recklessly or needlessly in the completion of their military duties.

#### **4. Honor, Revisited**

In the modern military loyalty helps to provide the sense of brotherhood that Janowitz refers to as the third part of his definition of military honor. A large part of military honor is comprised of that sense of brotherhood.<sup>66</sup> In the modern military, since soldiers do not spend their entire careers in the same units, that sense of brotherhood is to one's service, as well as one's fellow soldier. This is evident as the sense of corporateness that Huntington suggests is critical to professionalism.

Janowitz's final point on the basis of military honor concerns the preservation and enhancement of traditional glory.<sup>67</sup> The aristocratic basis of the military at one time held warfare to be a glorious and honorable pastime. Though actual combat was probably never the glorious event it was made out to be, the development of military prestige within society, and traditions within the military, lent themselves to this concept. In the modern era, with the increase in the effectiveness of military weapons, and the power and reach of the media, war has been brought to the masses in all its forms. But the grounds on which the ideas of prestige and glory are founded are the notions of service and sacrifice for the good of the society. Those notions are still intact, and are, today, along with the professional soldier's willingness to fight to protect the nation, the sources of military honor.<sup>68</sup>

Wakin reviews Janowitz's four points of honor, largely agreeing with him in their modern forms. The idea of being a "gentleman...refers today to standards of behavior and officer responsibilities rather than to aristocratic birth."<sup>69</sup> He also agrees that personal loyalty in the modern military is not directly to a commander, but to the Oath of Office and the Constitution. A sense of brotherhood still exists, but resides in the shared experiences of soldiers, and not in their station in life. Finally, Wakin also believes that

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<sup>66</sup> Janowitz, p. 220

<sup>67</sup> Ibid., p. 222

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 224

<sup>69</sup> Wakin, War, Morality, and the Military Profession, p. 201



“we have substituted for the pursuit of glory the perception that the military life is a rugged and strenuous life of service to the state demanding personal sacrifice.”<sup>70</sup>

Wakin also ties military honor to the complex issues of military leadership. Many officers in the military gain their first exposure to “military honor” through service academy honor codes and honor concepts. Most of these codes single out lying, cheating and stealing as acts that carry severe punishments. “But the avoidance of lying, cheating, and stealing does not by itself encompass all that we mean when we judge a person to be honorable.”<sup>71</sup> Wakin suggests that such codes, though important in inculcating a basic framework for behavior in a profession, may be too narrow to fully capture what is meant by military honor.

Codes of conduct, whether they be framed as honor codes for service academies, moral commandments for religious groups, prescriptions for medical or legal practitioners, and so on, all seem subject to the same sort of narrow interpretation which may cause distortions in our general view of moral behavior. The immature or unsophisticated frequently narrow their ethical sights to the behavior specifically delineated in the code so that what may have originally been intended as a minimum listing becomes treated as an exhaustive guide for ethical action.<sup>72</sup>

The ethos of honorable living is not easily captured in written documents. Such documents may provide guidelines, or common starting points, but the honor of a professional soldier is based on the classical theories such as those of Socrates and Plato: a good person is a good person all of the time, encompassing all of one’s acts.<sup>73</sup>

Sarkesian, like Wakin, also looks at honor as both simple and complex. For the military professional, honor is loyalty to the brotherhood of officers, gentlemanly conduct and personal sacrifice, much as mentioned above. On a broader scale, “it means acting in a fashion to maintain the dignity of the office, its repute, esteem, and respect. But above all honor is supposed to be based on moral values and ethical behavior that are rooted in universally accepted values.”<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> Wakin, War, Morality, and the Military Profession, p. 203

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Sarkesian, p. 203

Gabriel states that honor “is the ability to recognize moral dilemmas and to have the integrity and strength of character to act upon one’s perception.”<sup>75</sup> Like the other authors, he also believes that it is not a simple act, or narrowly defined subject.

Honor, like integrity as a moral sensitivity gives meaning to other character traits of the military professional. The soldier must be aware that he sometimes has an awesome task that involves grave ethical questions. He must also be aware that his own integrity and sense of ethical balance, his honor, is all that stands between him and immorality in the pursuit of his profession. Moreover, as a member of a profession his acts have an influence that reaches beyond himself and affects his fellow soldiers. Honor ultimately rests in moral sensitivity, being aware of the multiplicity of ethical dimensions to one’s actions and being able to act upon them.<sup>76</sup>

## **5. Integrity**

Gabriel introduces another trait in his definition of honor: integrity. Many people might not see a difference between honor and integrity. In fact, Hartle argues “For American military officers, honor connotes integrity, not military glory or prestige.” Many authors separate the two by describing integrity as more related to moral values and ethical concern, rather than a personal or professional reputation. Gabriel states, “Judgment and integrity are more important than other virtues insofar as they integrate other aspects of the character of the soldier....Judgment integrates an ethics of duty, while integrity welds together an ethics of virtue.”<sup>77</sup>

Integrity is derived from the Latin word integer, meaning wholeness or completeness. Integrity, according to Gabriel, “provides an overall perspective as to where other virtues fit in an individual’s overall character.”<sup>78</sup> In other words, if someone is to become a person of integrity, that person must have an idea of what it means to be ethical, both in society and in whatever profession in which the individual is involved.

The military profession has certain responsibilities to the state that require soldiers to be capable of making the right judgment calls, both in peacetime operations

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<sup>75</sup> p. 157

<sup>76</sup> Gabriel, p. 157

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 154

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., p. 154

and in combat. Wakin refers to two types of integrity: personal and professional.<sup>79</sup> Personal integrity is how an individual acts on a daily basis. When society says, “be a person of integrity,” it generally means to act in a truthful and reliable manner. But reliability, or consistency, as Wakin says, “is not all there is to personal integrity. There is little merit in being consistent with your principles if ‘thine ownself’ is egoistic, treacherous, criminal, and abusive. This is why integrity has to do with ‘wholeness,’ with one’s entire character, and what that moral character is like is what counts...integrity is the bridge between character and conduct.”<sup>80</sup>

Professional integrity involves those obligations, responsibilities and expectations of behavior that society, the military profession, and military tradition place on an individual soldier. To be an officer of integrity implies that one will consistently act in accordance with those expectations, striving always to be a professional in competent service to the state. Wakin turns to Aristotle to explain the concept of integrity. He suggests that man is morally praiseworthy when he does a right action if, first, he *knows* the action is right, second, he *chooses* the action for its sake, because he knows it is right, and finally, he does the action because of his immutable character, his *habit* of doing right.<sup>81</sup> Wakin states that, “when we commit ourselves to ‘integrity first’...we understand the importance of both personal integrity and professional integrity and through our efforts to keep them compatible we will best provide the crucial military function to our society.”<sup>82</sup>

Sarkesian looks at integrity in a similar fashion as Wakin and Gabriel, but in broader terms. Again, the Latin idea of the “whole man” is key. The combination of moral values and ethical behavior, a sensitivity to other human beings, and an awareness of the consequences of one’s actions, both as a member of society and a professional soldier, are what make a person of integrity.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Wakin, *Integrity First*, p. 113

<sup>80</sup> p. 115

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> p. 120

<sup>83</sup> Sarkesian, p. 203

These may seem like simple ideas, but Sarkesian stresses that the key is in their translation from abstract theories to the realities of military life.<sup>84</sup> Though the military defines many of its own standards of professional conduct, its purpose is to serve society, and must maintain some societal standards as well. The “whole man” in the modern military must be a person of integrity and a soldier of integrity; together they embody the Professional Military Ethic of the soldier.

### **C. SUMMARY**

There is no doubt in the literature on military professionalism and military ethics that leadership is an ethical imperative, and central to the continued success and development of the military. There is, and probably always will be, discussion as to which virtues are essential to the development of a good soldier. In the literature reviewed for this thesis, however, the virtues of service and sacrifice, honor, loyalty and integrity are clearly considered to be central to the modern ethos of the soldier.

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<sup>84</sup> p. 204

## V. DIFFERENCES IN THE ESSENTIAL MILITARY VIRTUES

This chapter examines those military virtues that the literature does not address in detail, or those values on which the authors differ as to their meaning or importance. One could argue that a professional soldier should have elements of all of these virtues, as indeed he or she should, but military authors and academics do not always agree on what each word means or how it may be attributed to the individual soldier. Nowhere in the literature do the authors directly state that a particular virtue is not needed to be a professional soldier. But those virtues that *are not* often discussed are as telling as those virtues that *are* often discussed. This is not to suggest that the concept of duty or the importance of courage and honesty are any less essential to the success of the modern American soldier, but only that they are analyzed differently in the literature reviewed. The authors surveyed included the following as other key elements in their discussions of ethics, professionalism, and the military—duty, courage, commitment, country, honesty and truthfulness, and competence.

### A. THE MILITARY VIRTUES, REVISITED

#### 1. Duty

Sarkesian agrees with Gabriel's idea of sacrifice as central to the notion of military service. But he expands on the meaning, using the term *duty* to describe the soldier's obligation to service. Sarkesian states, "For the military professional, duty presumes a commitment to carry out the dictates of his position and office. In brief, military professionals are expected to achieve their mission regardless of personal sacrifices. Ultimate liability becomes the operational concept."<sup>85</sup>

Hartle also agrees with Sarkesian, and widens his description of duty by stating,

Duty incorporates the concepts of obedience and self-discipline...it is of fundamental significance to the military professional, for the demands of duty can be particularly heavy. It may require the sacrifice of one's own life and the lives of others--an aspect of daily existence in a combat

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<sup>85</sup> p. 203

environment. The professional commitment is one of ‘ultimate liability.’<sup>86</sup>

A soldier’s duty is not simply the willingness to sacrifice. Nor is it simple obedience to orders, or to “carry out the dictates of his position and office,” as stated by Sarkesian. If mission accomplishment were the only measure of a soldier, there would be no need for military professionalism, leadership, or military ethics. The ends would justify the means. Gabriel refines duty by referring back to the idea that a good soldier must first be a good person, stating,

Duty does not consist merely in carrying out the orders of one’s superiors or the state, or for that matter even of the profession. Duty consists in fulfilling the obligations of one’s profession against the background of a genuine moral sensitivity--against the background of realizing that the obligations of the profession do not constitute the total obligations of the moral man. Thus, in some circumstances an obligation to disobey may arise. It is the realization that ethics consists of recognizing and making difficult choices that forms the background variable against which the virtue of duty must be taught and exercised. Duty is never total obedience; it is only the obligation to obey those orders that are not ethically wrong.<sup>87</sup>

Gabriel raises the point that there are times when a soldier will have to choose between two ethical precepts—dutifully following orders or making a value judgment based on one’s humanity or some other hierarchy of virtuous behavior. This ties into the idea that a soldier must be a good man and member of society first, which is precisely why a soldier must be trained to recognize when ethical tension exists, and have the ability, and the courage, to make a moral decision.

## **2. Courage**

Courage is generally found in two forms: physical courage, or bravery, and moral courage.

Physical courage in the face of fire and hardship is, of course, required of the soldier if he is to be a good leader. Most officers in a normal career, however, are unlikely to find themselves engaged in combat for more than a relatively short period of that career. Their daily activities will require

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<sup>86</sup> p. 47

<sup>87</sup> p. 156

another kind of courage—ethical and moral courage. Ethical courage requires a willingness to deal with difficult situations without fear, to accept the risks and responsibilities, and, if need be, to be willing to bear the cost of a course of action that one believes is right. Without physical courage, a soldier cannot be an effective combat leader; without moral courage, he cannot be an effective officer during times of peace or war.<sup>88</sup>

There is no equation for calculating bravery. People vary widely in their own abilities to withstand stress, nervousness or fear. The military attempts to condition its soldiers, through training and experience, to live up to the ideals of physical courage, and to have the ability to do what is necessary in combat. But if combat is, as Gabriel suggests, a relatively small portion of a soldier's life, what about employing moral courage in the military, and the individual soldier's life?

Moral courage may also be difficult to measure, though it is often recognized in daily life. The individual who is willing to deal with difficult situations, or to accept responsibility when things go poorly, to do what he says he will, or to stand up for his or her principles, is recognized as a person of character--as someone who possesses moral courage.

People often think of acts of heroism when they think of courage. In the military, those who act "above and beyond the call of duty," with extreme courage in the face of danger, may be awarded the Medal of Honor. Admiral Stockdale, a winner of the Medal of Honor, speaks of those that win it not as soldiers of unique strength or bravery, but as men and women who exceed others in their moral righteousness:

These guys all have but *one big thing* in common: they will not accept the status quo if it does not meet their standards. They all have a short fuse when predicaments, as they see them, are not tolerable. For an instant or an hour or a month, each of them has stood up and turned his world around. 'It's not *right* that that ticking hand grenade should kill everybody in this foxhole.' 'It's not *right* that this company of marines surrounded on this mountain top by the Chosin Reservoir should wither and freeze and surrender! We're going to break out of here!' 'It's not *right* that I should bring harm to my fellow prisoners by letting myself be forced to inform on them.'

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<sup>88</sup> p. 170

Nobody gets this medal for his words, or his attitude or his consistent high-quality judgment or reliability. It can't be given like an honorary degree after a superb campaign. He gets it for a specific *act*. (And it's not something he can try to get.) It all centers on this one impulse: 'No, by God,' 'Not me,' 'Over my dead body.'<sup>89</sup>

The recognition that things are not *right*, the decision to do something about it, and the willingness to act, are the foundations of moral courage. Having the courage to stand up for one's beliefs implies that one has principles. That ethos is determined professionally for the soldier, but is acted upon individually. Moral courage requires knowledge of professional ethics, as well as one's own ethical beliefs, and the commitment to stand up for those principles.

### **3. Commitment**

Both Sarkesian and Hartle use another word that is often included as a virtue in a professional, and is similar to the concepts of service, sacrifice, and duty. That word is commitment. Hartle suggests that in the modern era, the United States armed forces begin with the idea of service to the state.<sup>90</sup> Once someone has decided to volunteer for such service, they must be *committed* to the purposes of that body, and the rules, values and obligations that define it.

Also evident in our national history and implicit in the provisions of the Constitution, which authorizes the raising of armed forces, is the firm belief that these ennobling values are worth fighting for and that the use of force in their defense is fully justified. That is the soldier's purpose. When military members pledge to the support and defense of the Constitution, they commit themselves, by logical extension, to the principles and values that form the basis of its provisions.<sup>91</sup>

Such commitment is the basis of the commission for the officers of the United States military. That commission, sworn to upon an officer's initial enlistment in the military during the oath of office, and reaffirmed upon each subsequent promotion, details the officer's obligation, not only to his or her chain of command, but to the highest document of the land, the basis of law in the United States, the Constitution. Hartle

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<sup>89</sup> Stockdale, pp. 108-9

<sup>90</sup> p. 49

<sup>91</sup> Hartle, p. 44



points out that, “An officer's loyalty is to the principles and values manifested in the Constitution, not to the person of the commander in chief. The oath and the commission provide the foundation for the traditional idealistic code of the United States armed forces--the code I have been calling the professional military ethic.”<sup>92</sup>

Commitment, though, is not simply to an ideal of law, or to the nation, but also to the soldier's duty, responsibility, and fellow men-at-arms. To be a truly committed professional soldier requires a person to continually train for and learn about combat. A good soldier must be committed to being responsible for the defense of the nation. A professional who lives up to a military ethic must also be committed to caring for his or her fellow soldiers as much as for country or self.

#### **4. Country**

A sense of patriotism is useful for a soldier. If not for the spirit of defending one's country, there would be no soldiers. But patriotism in and of itself is not necessarily a virtue. Taken to extremes, patriotism can become nationalism to the detriment of all others, isolationism to the exclusion of the rest of the world, and for the soldier, militarism, at the risk of the peace and security of the state. Most soldiers, however, especially those in the Army and those who attended West Point, where the motto is, “Duty, Honor, Country,” give a more complex meaning to the simple word *country*.

For Hartle and Sarkesian, the word “country” implies much more than patriotism. For Hartle, country is an outlet for duty, honor and sacrifice. “The country is the object to which the performance of duty and the maintenance of honor are devoted....the country itself (the state) is the beneficiary of the services of the armed forces. Further, members of the profession subordinate personal welfare to the welfare of the nation.”<sup>93</sup> Sarkesian adds, “The adherence to concepts of integrity, duty, and honor are for the purposes of performing the essential professional function, service to the country.”<sup>94</sup> For both, the virtues are elements in support of each other, and in support of the ideal function of the military: service to the country.

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<sup>92</sup> Hartle, p. 44

<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p. 49

<sup>94</sup> p. 204

## **5. Honesty and Truthfulness**

These traits are one and the same, but as with loyalty, there are two aspects to the concept of honesty. The first deals with the military as a whole in relation to society. Because of the military's power, responsibility and function, and the fact that society legitimizes and funds it, the military must remain honest in its dealings with the American people. This is especially difficult regarding the often confusing and political business of defense contracting, the secrecy of intelligence gathering, and the movement and employment of troops, among other things.

Where the military, especially its leadership, cannot falter is in its honest recommendations to the President for the use of troops in the national interest. This leads to the second aspect of honesty, the military leadership's need to be honest with its junior personnel, especially when asking them to go into harm's way. As Wakin stresses, drawing from Captain Michael Wheeler, "trust itself is readily given only to those superiors who are perceived to be persons of high moral integrity."<sup>95</sup> Military officers have a responsibility as professionals to give unbiased, accurate, and honest appraisals of military capabilities and operations. At the same time, they have a responsibility to care for the welfare of their troops.

## **6. Competence**

Being a competent officer is the responsibility of every soldier who leads. A large part of an officer's competency is in his or her responsibility for and loyalty to the troops. Their lives are in their superior's care, and may be sacrificed on the decisions of a single officer. A sure way to garner the trust of one's subordinates is to be a capable officer. Since the military function is to wage war, and the particular expertise of a soldier is the management of violence, the soldier, especially a leader of soldiers, has an ethical responsibility to be competent in those skills. American society grants power to the military, supporting it through taxes, and expecting the armed forces to provide for the country's defense. Without the expertise and professionalism of the military, the United States would not be the power that it is.

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<sup>95</sup> Wakin, Integrity First, p. 83

Gabriel expresses some concern that the growing technological sophistication in the military may lead to greater specialization, thereby requiring greater technical competence from the individual soldier.<sup>96</sup> His concern is that over-specialization, especially a reliance on technology, will detract from the officer's ability to lead and manage, and will limit soldiers to a narrow view of the military profession, hampering their ability to lead and fight in battle when necessary. As Hartle points out, "The nature of the military profession, and the responsibilities of the profession to the society it serves, are such as to elevate professional competence to the level of an ethical imperative."<sup>97</sup>

Though this list is by no means complete, it presents the common virtues addressed by the authors, and how they interpret them for the military. Service, sacrifice, duty, commitment, and country are all fairly similar in their meanings as applied to the military, if not in how the authors specifically address them and compare them to other values. Courage, both physical and moral, and honesty, are both commonly mentioned in the literature as essential elements of a professional soldier's ethic. Competence, as an ethical imperative, is a relatively new idea in the professional ethic of the military, rising to such a level due to the increases in technology and destructive power of weapons.

It is fair to say that those authors with experience in the Army tend to rely heavily on the West Point motto of "Duty, Honor, Country" as keys to the professional ethic, seeing other attributes as elements of one of those three. Other authors incorporate a wider range of values on an equal footing. Though the authors differ in their opinions of which value is the ideal trait for a soldier, they all agree that an individual may be a good citizen with very few of these values, or even without an element of most. They also agree, though, that one could never be a good soldier without some degree of all of these virtues. How does the soldier reconcile the difference?

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<sup>96</sup> Gabriel, p. 172

<sup>97</sup> p. 50

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## **VI. SOLDIERS AND SOCIETY**

There has always been discussion among free-minded people about the role of the soldier in society. From the beginning, America has granted significant power to , and placed its trust in, the armed forces it has raised. By and large, the soldiers of the past and the soldiers of the present have served faithfully and honorably. But as the roles and missions of the military continue to expand, society continues to develop, and technology continues to “shrink” the world, how do the soldiers of today and the soldiers of tomorrow reconcile their profession with their role in society?

The armed forces of the United States each have independently developed a set of virtues known as Core Values. Besides recognizing the importance of stating and living up to those values, the military services have also developed corresponding training sessions to inculcate recruits at every level, from the newest enlisted recruit to every officer accession program. Though each service has its own list, there are a number of common values that form the basis of the modern ethos of the American military.

### **A. THE INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER IN SOCIETY**

If one must be a good person first, as well as a good member of society, how can one also be a good soldier? It would seem that, often, what society and humanity value are not what the military can afford to value. This is only partly true. The laws of war that the American military recognizes, the rules of engagement under which the military fights, and the sense of professionalism that pervades the United States armed forces, prove that, as an organization, the military believes in and supports certain humanitarian values. Those principles include a person’s right, as friend, foe, or neutral observer, to human dignity, intrinsic human worth, and freedom from suffering.<sup>98</sup> Most people in American society would agree that these are values to which every person is entitled. Such humanitarian values are the foundations of the American social ethic, and, therefore, must be the foundation of the modern Professional Military Ethic. Society and

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<sup>98</sup> Hartle, p. 85

the military differ, however, in the military's opinion of which of those values may be extended to the individual soldier, and to what degree.

There is no doubt that every soldier, as an American citizen, is entitled to his or her rights under the Constitution. But for the military to operate effectively, safely, and as efficiently as possible, the individual soldier must be willing to surrender those rights under certain conditions.

Wakin suggests there is a difference between what people generally deem to be the "liberal" values of American society, and what people consider to be the "conservative" values of the military institution.

Because the military function is so directly related to our highest human values, those charged with the leadership of that function must be sensitive to those values and must exhibit some understanding of them. The values of American society are said by many to be 'liberal,' yet the military services responsible for defending those liberal values are said themselves to be 'conservative,' for those who would defend the status quo are so labeled. Concern for the individual dignity of each person suggests a liberal orientation, while those who would fight to preserve individual dignity must be asked to sublimate in many ways their own individualism for the sake of the group. It is in this sense that contemporary commentators are wont to point out a paradoxical discrepancy between supposed civilian values and the military virtues. Yet, most acknowledge that without the conservative values of loyalty, obedience, and self-restraint, the military function would disintegrate. Hackett suggests that it is the responsibility of the military leader to bridge this seeming paradox when he reminds us that, 'the young officer ...has to be made to remember that only a person of liberal mind is entitled to exercise coercion over others in a society of free men.'<sup>99</sup>

Hartle suggests that "the fundamental national values reflected in the Constitution can be summarized as freedom, equality, individualism, and democracy."<sup>100</sup> As pointed out by Wakin, those are the values that a liberal society, such as America, values above all, and the very principles that the U.S. military fights to protect.

A simple review of what Hartle suggests each value consists of shows that freedom, to most Americans, is the ability to live in the manner that they choose. Their

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<sup>99</sup> Integrity First, pp. 82-3. "Hackett" is General Sir John Winthrop Hackett. Excerpt from the Harmon Memorial Lecture, U.S. Air Force Academy, 1970.

<sup>100</sup> Hartle, p. 85

rights, as guaranteed in the Constitution, protect that ability, and therefore freedom and rights are often synonymous in the American ethos. Equality, in the American sense, is largely the opportunity that each person has to find his or her place in society, and to achieve to his or her potential. Individualism is protected vehemently in the United States, based on America's traditions of religious freedom, equality, and inalienable rights. Moreover, like freedom, individualism is the right to live in the manner that the individual chooses. Democracy in America is more than a system of government, but an ideology--a belief in the goodness of man, in the rule of the majority, and the value of each citizen.<sup>101</sup>

In the military, the individual soldier *chooses* to set aside certain freedoms in order to best defend the country. The soldier also accepts the hierarchy of rank over equality, not because he or she is worth any less as an individual, but because, as a professional, the soldier realizes where his or her duty, loyalty, and competencies lie. Individually, each soldier contributes to the unit, and has the right and the opportunity to rise to his or her highest potential. But a person's individualism is subjugated to the greater unit by a sense of service and sacrifice that each soldier volunteers to accept. The spirit of democracy is forever ingrained in the soldier in swearing to defend and uphold the Constitution, even as he or she chooses to follow orders and live within the military profession's greater system of rules and regulations.

Though it seems as if the soldier's values do not coincide with the values of society, in fact, the reverse is true. The values that the military profession supports and defends, its ethic, is, "grounded on the premise that military ethics converge with the ethical values of the larger society."<sup>102</sup>

In short, since society grants the military legitimacy, and the military serves society, military values must be congruent with the greater values of society. However, because of the nature of the military profession, it can diverge from society in requiring other virtues to be more applicable to the military life. In doing so, the American armed forces define the modern Professional Military Ethic.

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<sup>101</sup> Hartle, pp. 89-94

<sup>102</sup> Wakin, War, Morality, and the Military Profession, from an article by Sam C. Sarkesian and Thomas M. Gannon

## **B. THE INDIVIDUAL SOLDIER AND THE MILITARY INSTITUTION**

Can the military, as an institution, change an individual's ethics? As a profession, the military demands that its members live up to the values described in this thesis. The military controls its own members by screening applicants desiring to enter the profession. Those deemed morally unfit by society, through convictions in a court of law, excessive drug use, or other means, are not accepted into the profession. But what about those who are accepted? With such a wide demographic range of inductees, how does the military develop a professional ethic within its forces?

No one has any ethical sense of a profession until he joins it and is made specifically aware of its ethical requirements. Moreover, even a good man outside the profession may not be a good man within it. A whole range of ethical values acquired outside the profession may be good for some circumstances that arise outside the profession but may at the same time be very poor guides for action within the profession...one ought not to confuse the possession of certain virtues with ethics nor assume that all virtues or ethics are particularly relevant to a given profession. To put the matter another way, some obligations and responsibilities are more relevant to some professions than to others.<sup>103</sup>

What Gabriel argues for is the creation of an actual code of ethics for the military, or the publishing of a Professional Military Ethic. Military ethics, as defined earlier, are those actions, obligations and virtues that are appropriate for members of the armed forces to possess. Once the initial screening is complete, those who wish to become members of the United States military must pass the indoctrination programs, where they will begin to learn the ethos of the profession they have joined. Their cultural knowledge of, and biases toward, the military need to be melded into a modern ethic that is universal for the military and may be applied in their personal and professional lives, in times of peace and combat.

Gabriel presents a possible code that places a soldier's ethical responsibility, as a professional, above all else. Though it is dated, referring to all soldiers in the masculine, it could be easily updated to include the modern realities of the American fighting forces. The purpose of Gabriel's "The Soldier's Code of Ethics" (see appendix A) is to "develop

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<sup>103</sup> Gabriel, p. 123



and sustain the values, habits, and practices traditionally associated with the military as a special community of brothers who share special values and responsibilities.”<sup>104</sup> It states that the nature of military service is a moral charge, and soldiers must act on their senses of ethical integrity, honor, trust, and responsibility.<sup>105</sup>

Hartle also proposes a Professional Military Ethic for today’s soldier. He draws from his own discussion of appropriate values for the soldier, the principles set forth in the Constitution, and from the broad principles of the Army Field Manual to formulate an ethos for the American fighting man (see Appendix B).<sup>106</sup> His proposal stresses service to the country, duty first, honorable conduct, the constant development of professional skill and competency, responsibility for individual actions, the military’s strict conformity to civil authority, and an adherence to the laws of war.<sup>107</sup>

His inclusion of the basic tenets of the laws of war widens the military’s professional ethic considerably. Though the laws of war are based on moral principles, it may be too much to include as a part of the American Professional Military Ethic. The laws of war are decided by international treaty, and subject to the constant scrutiny and challenges of many nations. In one sense, they are simply a legal means of controlling the battlefield, much like rules of engagement, whereas the traditional American military ethic is based on deeper commitments to service, sacrifice, honor and integrity.

Each individual armed service of the United States has a set of Core Values. These are guidelines for ethical thought and behavior, more than a set of codified rules. As stated previously, such codes are not exhaustive, but minimum lists of the virtues of military professionalism.

Following a series of scandals in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, involving cadets and midshipmen at the service academies on up through high ranking flag and general officers, each service set about adopting a set of values to be inculcated in their

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<sup>104</sup> Gabriel, p. 139

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> Hartle, p. 52

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

troops from the lowliest recruit to the highest ranking member, as well as each civilian employee of the military departments.

Based on those scandals, and the lessons of history, especially the hard lessons of the last thirty years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, American military leadership recognized that to maintain the public's trust in the military as an institution, and to be able to adjust to the quickly changing nature of warfare, they had to reinvigorate the military with a sense of professionalism that would guide the individual soldier in war, peacekeeping, humanitarian aid, peacetime operations both in the United States and abroad, or any other contingency that could arise.

The results were each individual service's Core Value statements (see Appendices C, D, and E). Though each service has a different number of virtues, and defines each virtue in slightly different terms, they all include values discussed in this thesis.

The Army uses seven values, arranged in no particular order of importance. There are also supporting statements for each value that are designed to help people understand and employ the values in everyday life. Though there is no recognized hierarchy of value, perhaps the supporting sentence for "Honor" in the Army's Core Values sums up the idea: "Live up to all the Army values."

The Air Force, on the other hand, does specify the order of virtues, stating clearly, "Integrity first." Though the Air Force does not use supporting sentences to explain their Core Values, as the Army and Naval Services do, it does charge the Air Education and Training Command and the United States Air Force Academy "with promulgating these values at every level of the Air Force."<sup>108</sup>

The Air Force also stresses excellence as a key value. This can be applied in a similar fashion as the value of competence, meaning be capable in one's mission, or it can also be applied to all aspects, physically, mentally, and morally.

The Navy and Marine Corps, also known as the Naval Services, are joined together by their common Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment. The supporting sentences of these three values stress different elements of each. Honor is

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<sup>108</sup> Order given by the Honorable Sheila E. Widnall, Secretary of the Air Force, and Gen. Ronald R. Fogleman, Chief of Staff of the Air Force, 1995.

defined by integrity, responsibility and accountability, and honesty. Courage is defined as the “moral and mental strength to do what is right.” Commitment, for the Navy and Marine Corps is comprised of duty, respect, care, striving for improvement and competence, and professional excellence.<sup>109</sup>

### **C. SUMMARY**

Though there is a wide range of values, and interpretations of those values, the military profession does require certain values to be adopted by its members. Military values such as service, sacrifice, honor, duty, integrity, loyalty, and courage combine with social values such as freedom, equality, individualism and democracy to produce the modern American soldier.

These values are applied by today’s soldiers to all aspects of their lives--as members of society and as professional warriors. The military profession looks for certain individuals from within American society, those willing to serve and sacrifice for their country, and to commit to certain standards of behavior. These people, once enlisted or commissioned in the services, practice and maintain the ethos of the profession. While their lists of Core Values vary, all four services stress the importance of ethical behavior in the everyday life of a soldier.

Some authors in the literature suggest a need for a codified statement of ethics by which soldiers could abide. Two such examples are Gabriel’s “Soldier’s Code,” and Hartle’s “Professional Military Ethic” statement. Others suggest that by inculcating the new recruits and officer candidates with an ethical and professional sense of themselves and their role in the military, an appropriate sense of what is required for the American military will develop on its own, and with the help of literature such as that reviewed for this thesis.

The modern military has split the difference between these arguments, providing the guidelines for ethical thought and behavior with the services’ Core Values Statements, but without specifying actual actions that the individual soldier must take. Though the services differ on which values are listed, or whether or not there is a

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<sup>109</sup> SECNAVINST 5350.15A

hierarchy, they all agree that the military must address the issue of value development and the importance of inculcating a Professional Military Ethic in the armed forces.

## **VII. CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **A. CONCLUSIONS ON THE MODERN PROFESSIONAL MILITARY ETHIC**

The United States military is a professional fighting force. Long accepted as the foundation of a definition of professionalism, Huntington's characteristics of expertise, responsibility, and corporateness are all inherent in the military. Similar to the nature of professionalism itself, military professionalism must continue to evolve in its dedication to service to the state. The military must also consistently define its function and its missions, while constantly developing and applying an appropriate military ethos to every aspect of a soldier's life.

Huntington originally suggested "The military ethic is thus pessimistic, collectivist, historically inclined, power-oriented, nationalistic, militaristic, pacifist, and instrumentalist in its view of the military profession. It is, in brief, realistic and conservative."<sup>110</sup> Though much of what Huntington says is indeed true in the formation and purpose of the American military, such a definition is largely based on a Hobbesian view of mankind as evil, self-serving and prone to war. Huntington agrees with this view, and bases his discussion of the nature of civil-military relations and military ethics on the balance of political power.<sup>111</sup>

Like Huntington's definition of military professionalism, this view of the military ethic is incomplete, not accounting for its ability to evolve with changes in society. Mankind is, historically, prone to war. But viewing mankind as inherently evil, with no hope for any other outcome in life other than a constant state of warfare, defeats the purpose of the military, which is to manage violence. Managing violence is the responsibility of the military, but also the responsibility of the civilian leadership of America and society as a whole. The military fights wars, conducts peacekeeping, and carries out every other mission assigned in the hopes of producing peace. The Professional Military Ethic of today is defined by the means used to manage violence, to

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<sup>110</sup> P. 79

<sup>111</sup> Huntington, p. 63

include international law, rules of engagement, and the ethics of the profession of arms. Hartle suggests, “The three factors that have shaped the American professional military ethic are the functional requirements of military service, the international laws of war, and the core values of American society.”<sup>112</sup>

The military ethos is based on history, tradition, function and responsibility, as well as the aims and demands of society. The literature has helped, and will continue to help, to define and review that ethos. As the world changes, the military ethic must also continue to change. Such changes have occurred in the past due to advances in science and technology, changes in social expectations, and the development of new political and economic theories. But the changes in values for the military have not been as drastic. They have evolved over time, paralleling those developments in society, and with corresponding changes in the nature of the military function. Though the service the armed forces provide and its basic function and expertise have not changed, the employment of the military in Military Operations Other Than War necessitates a review of military ethics.

The result is a growing concern over the very nature of the American fighting spirit, and the quality of the modern professional-in-arms. Though the literature disagrees on whether or not a Professional Military Ethic needs to be written, it emphatically agrees that an understandable and applicable ethic must be inculcated in the troops and adhered to in every aspect of a soldier’s life. The military itself also seems to disagree within each independent service as to which values are essential, and how they should be applied.

What is suggested is a possible hierarchy of virtues for the military professional. The values that most of the literature discusses are: Professionalism in the officer corps (both commissioned and non-commissioned), Leadership, Selfless-Service, Sacrifice, Honor, Loyalty, and Integrity. These could all be considered first tier characteristics. This does not belittle the other values the literature also addresses as being important for the soldier. These include: Courage, Duty, Commitment, Country (Patriotism), Honesty (Truthfulness), and Competence. If the previous list is considered to be the first tier, the

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<sup>112</sup> Hartle, p. 8

latter is the second tier of virtues. It is hard to avoid the negative connotations in stating that certain characteristics belong in different categories, or are less often addressed by the literature, but what is suggested is that certain traits, namely those in the first tier, are most recognizable and necessary in the formation and maintenance of a Professional Military Ethic. The literature selected for this thesis clearly stresses those virtues identified as the first tier.

Though the list of virtues is not actually codified, as Hartle and Gabriel suggest it should be, such qualities, and their definitions and applications to the life of the soldier, need to be recognized for their core contributions to the Professional Military Ethic. It should also be noted that the very act of joining the military, volunteering to serve one's society, is a moral choice, supported by the enlistment or commissioning oath. That choice needs to be supported and built upon to develop soldiers capable of operating in today's changing military environment. Beginning with the individuals' decisions to join the military, they must continually be instructed in the nature of military ethics and the demands of the profession.

## **B. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE MODERN MILITARY**

This thesis briefly addresses the history, development and nature of military professionalism and ethics through well-known literature on the subjects. More studies and review should be undertaken to continue to challenge and develop the moral senses of today's soldiers.

A Professional Military Ethic does not spring to life overnight. However, the foundation of such an ethic already exists in today's military. The vast majority of soldiers live an honorable life, and recognize themselves as professionals dedicated to the service of their country. There is, however, always room for improvement. Much like the Professional Military Ethic itself, the military's training must continually develop to keep up with changes in society, the nature of the military function, and the PME.

Below are a number of recommendations for further study in the field of military ethics and implications for sustaining a Professional Military Ethic in the modern military:

1) Widen the literature studied in order to expand the definitions of the essential military virtues, or study virtues not addressed by this thesis.

2) Review the services' Core Values Statements. Determine if military members know those values, if they can define them, and if they understand how the Core Values apply to their everyday lives.

3) Study to what extent, and how, the military ethos is used, and should be used, in recruiting. Determine whether or not the key elements of the PME: professionalism, leadership, service, sacrifice, responsibility, honor and integrity, should be used to recruit. Though it is difficult to test for such qualities in young people, and much of the growth and development of the individual occurs once he or she joins the military, by stressing those elements of military service, a certain amount of self-selection will occur. Those that are drawn to such qualities are probably more likely to possess and apply them. Determine feasibility of such an approach for the recruiting commands.

4) Review the curriculum of classes in military ethics, specifically those classes taught at service academies and war colleges. Military ethics, its meaning, history, and application to today's armed forces are required courses at the nation's service academies, Reserve Officer Training Courses (ROTC), officer candidate schools, and recruit training centers. Are they effective? More challenging classes, and the ability to teach military ethics, could be developed and taught at Department of Defense graduate schools, such as the Army and Navy War Colleges, the Naval Postgraduate School, Drill Instructor schools and Senior Enlisted Academies. Though many of these institutions do teach ethics, or offer electives in the field, and some do require courses in ethics, it should be required coursework in all schools and at all levels, but especially for the officer corps. Those schools and training courses with required classes in military ethics should be expanded to include the history, development, application (using military case studies), and teaching of a Professional Military Ethic common to all services and for all situations.



5) Review the service academies' honor codes and/or concepts. Determine if those codes and concepts teach ethical behavior that can be applied after graduation. Measure the cadets' views and midshipmen's views on both the concept and the code. Determine if one such code is more suitable than another.

6) Determine where and how midshipmen and/or cadets learn ethical behavior. Such development could occur through classes on leadership or ethics, through honor codes, religious experiences, from peer groups, or from other sources. Discover if ethical development occurs over four years at a service academy.

7) Compare and contrast the elements and nature of written codes of ethics, to include the Laws of War, the Code of Conduct, the Geneva Conventions, the War Crimes Acts, and other codes suggested in the literature.

These are but a few of the possible next steps in developing and teaching a Professional Military Ethic to today's soldier. More reading and qualitative studies, as well as quantitative work in military sociology, are required to continue to evolve the military ethos and ensure that the profession remains not only relevant to society, but trusted and respected within society.

## **C. SUMMARY**

Though American society and the proper civilian authority give legitimacy to the military, "The soldier cannot surrender to the civilian his right to make ultimate moral judgments."<sup>113</sup> It is clear from the literature, and proven in history, that the individual soldier is first and foremost a member of humanity, and the society that produced him or her. In the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the ethical aspect of war must be taught repeatedly and clearly to those individuals who are directly involved in combat, as well as trained to and lived up to in all aspects of military life. It is up to the individual with the weapon, in many cases, to make the right decision. As the military moves to smaller units, and increasing special operations, the military commander must trust his or her

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<sup>113</sup> Huntington, p. 78

troops more and more. For today's soldier, the ultimate military virtue is morality--not a measure of one's devoutness, but in doing what is right--at all times. As Plato suggests, there is nothing more important than the work of a soldier being well done. This can only be accomplished through studying and applying a Professional Military Ethic to all aspects of the soldier's life.

## **APPENDIX A: GABRIEL'S "THE SOLDIER'S CODE OF ETHICS"**

The nature of command and military service is a moral charge that places each soldier at the center of unavoidable ethical responsibility.

A soldier's sense of ethical integrity is at the center of his effectiveness as a soldier and a leader. Violating one's ethical sense of honor is never justified even at a cost to one's career.

Every soldier holds a special position of trust and responsibility. No soldier will ever violate that trust or avoid his responsibility by any of his actions, no matter the personal cost.

In faithfully executing the lawful orders of his superiors, a soldier's loyalty is to the welfare of his men and mission. While striving to carry out his mission, he will never allow his men to be misused in any way.

A soldier will never require his men to endure hardships or suffer dangers to which he is unwilling to expose himself. Every soldier must openly share the burden of risk and sacrifice to which his fellow soldiers are exposed.

A soldier is first and foremost a leader of men. He must lead his men by example and personal actions; he must always set the standard for personal bravery, courage, and leadership.

A soldier will never execute an order he regards to be morally wrong, and he will report all such orders, policies, or actions of which he is aware to appropriate authorities.

No soldier will ever willfully conceal any act of his superiors, subordinates, or peers that violates his sense of ethics. A soldier cannot avoid ethical judgments and must assume responsibility for them.

No soldier will punish, allow the punishment of, or in any way harm or discriminate against a subordinate or peer for telling the truth about any matter.

All soldiers are responsible for the actions of their comrades in arms. The unethical and dishonorable acts of one diminish us all. The honor of the military

profession and military service is maintained by the acts of its members, and these actions must always be above reproach.

## **APPENDIX B: HARTLE’S “PROFESSIONAL ARMY ETHIC”**

### **Professional Soldiers**

1. Accept service to country as their watchword and defense of the Constitution of the United States of America as their calling.
2. Place their duty first. They subordinate their personal interests to the requirements of their professional functions.
3. Conduct themselves at all times as persons of honor whose integrity, loyalty, and courage are exemplary. Such qualities are essential on the battlefield if a military organization is to function effectively.
4. Develop and maintain the highest possible level of professional knowledge and skill. To do less is to fail to meet their obligations to the country, the profession, and fellow soldiers.
5. Take full responsibility for the manner in which their orders are carried out.
6. Promote and safeguard, within the context of mission accomplishment, the welfare of their subordinates as persons, not merely as soldiers.
7. Conform to strictly to the principle that subordinates the military to civilian authority. They do not involve themselves or their subordinates in domestic politics beyond the exercise of basic civil rights.
8. Adhere to the laws of war and the regulations of their service in performing their professional functions.

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## **APPENDIX C: UNITED STATES ARMY CORE VALUES**

LOYALTY: “Bear true faith and allegiance to the United States Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers.”

DUTY: “Fulfill your obligations.”

RESPECT: “Treat people as they should be treated.”

SELFLESS-SERVICE: “Put the welfare of the nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own.”

HONOR: “Live up to all the Army values.”

INTEGRITY: “Do what’s right, legally and morally.”

PERSONAL COURAGE: “Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral).”

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## **APPENDIX D: UNITED STATES AIR FORCE CORE VALUES**

INTEGRITY FIRST

SERVICE BEFORE SELF

EXCELLENCE IN ALL WE DO

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## **APPENDIX E: UNITED STATES NAVY AND MARINE CORPS CORE VALUES**

### **HONOR, COURAGE, COMMITMENT**

*HONOR:* I am accountable for my professional and personal behavior. I will be mindful of the privilege I have to serve my fellow Americans.

I will:

- Abide by an uncompromising code of integrity, taking full responsibility for my actions and keeping my word.
- Conduct myself in the highest ethical manner in relationships with seniors, peers and subordinates.
- Be honest and truthful in my dealings within and outside the Department of the Navy.
- Make honest recommendations to my seniors, and peers and seek honest recommendations from junior personnel.
- Encourage new ideas and deliver bad news forthrightly.
- Fulfill my legal and ethical responsibilities in my public and private life.

*COURAGE:* is the value that gives me the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution, even in the face of temptation or adversity.

I will:

- Have the courage to meet the demands of my profession and the mission entrusted to me.
- Make decisions and act in the best interest of the Department of the Navy and the nation, without regard to personal consequences.

- Overcome all challenges while adhering to the highest standards of personal conduct and decency.

- Be loyal to my nation by ensuring the resources entrusted to me are used in an honest, careful and efficient way.

*COMMITMENT:* The day-to-day duty of every man and woman in the Department of the Navy is to join together as a team to improve the quality of our work, our people and our selves.

I will:

- Foster respect up and down the chain of command.
- Care for the professional, personal and spiritual well being of my people.
- Show respect toward all people without regard to race, religion or gender.
- Always strive for positive change and personal improvement.
- Exhibit the highest degree of moral character, professional excellence, quality and competence in all that I do.

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